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# The Chat

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WINTER 2009

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The Ornithological Society of the Carolinas

# THE CHAT

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WINTER 2009

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## 2008 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

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**Harry E. LeGrand, Jr.<sup>1</sup>, Chair, Keith E. Camburn, Samuel  
Cooper, Richard J. Davis, Eric V. Dean, Wayne K.  
Forsythe, Jeffrey S. Pippen, Michael H. Tove, Russell L.  
Tyndall**

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This report enumerates the decisions of the Carolina Bird Club's North Carolina Bird Records Committee during 2008. The Committee expanded from seven members to nine members during the year, with the addition of Jeffrey Pippen and Michael Tove. Committee voting information is referenced in parentheses (i.e., year report received, reference number).

### Accepted as Valid

The reported identification is judged to be accurate, and the bird is judged to be of wild origin. Photographs and/or written descriptions of all accepted records have been deposited in the NC Museum of Natural Sciences.

**Pacific Loon** (*Gavia pacifica*) (08-17). One was seen at Lake Townsend near Greensboro, Guilford County, in late 2008. The bird was first found on 18 November 2008, by Henry Link, Scott DePue, and George Wheaton, and it remained on the lake for over a month. The Committee accepted photos taken by Link, Melissa Whitmire, and Harry Sell. The species is already on the Official List, as there are numerous coastal records. However, this is just the second inland record (away from tidal water), the other being from Lake Tahoma in McDowell County.

**Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel** (*Oceanodroma monorhis*) (08-07). One was photographed in the Gulf Stream off Hatteras Inlet on 2 June 2008. The Committee accepted a photo taken by Steve Howell. This is the second record for the state. As the first was also documented by photos, the species is already on the Official List. These are the only two known records for United States waters.

**Snowy Plover** (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) (08-09). One was seen on 17 September 2008 at the Ocracoke Inlet spit in Hyde County by Sidney Maddock. The Committee accepted Maddock's photos. This is the fourth state record, and as several previous records have been documented by photos, the Snowy Plover is already on the Official List.

**Snowy Plover** (08-10). Another individual, presumably different from the above bird, was seen at Bear Island in Hammocks Beach State Park on 22 September 2008, by Emily Rice and Alexandra Houston. The Committee accepted a photo taken by Houston. This is the fifth state record. There is the

chance that this was the same individual as seen five days earlier much farther northward along the coast. However, because different observers were involved, in different counties, the Committee regarded these as two separate records.

**Common Murre** (*Uria aalge*) (08-06). One adult, essentially in breeding plumage, was found injured on the beach at Emerald Isle, Carteret County, on 2 April 2008. It died in a wildlife shelter soon thereafter (specimen to the NC Museum of Natural Sciences). The Committee accepted photos taken by John Fussell. This is the second accepted record for the state. As the first record was of a photographed bird, the species is already on the Official List. This record is remarkable in its late date (April) and is the first spring record for the state.

**Broad-billed Hummingbird** (*Cynanthus latirostris*) (08-15). A male spent several months in 2008 at feeders in the yard of Patti Holland in New Bern, Craven County. Its identity was confirmed on 9 November 2008 by Susan Campbell, who trapped the bird; it had been banded near Charleston, SC, the previous winter. The Committee accepted photos taken by John Ennis, Derb Carter, and Harry Sell. The species is already on the Official List, as this is the third state record, all documented by photos. Interestingly, one of the previous two records is also from the New Bern area.

**Kirtland's Warbler** (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) (08-13). One was seen by eight observers at "Hospital Fields" in Transylvania County, on 1 October 2008. The thorough written description, provided by Norma and Bill Siebenheller, was accepted by the Committee. The species is already on the Official List. This is the fourth accepted record for the state, with three from the mountains and one from the piedmont. None of the records is documented by photos or specimen. (Several additional reports in the literature were not accepted by the Committee in earlier years.)

**MacGillivray's Warbler** (*Oporornis tolmiei*) (08-01). One was observed on 29 December 2007, by Ricky Davis, and on 1 January 2008 by a number of birders, at Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge, Hyde County. The Committee accepted Davis's written details and photos taken by Jeff Lewis. This is the second state record, both being from Hyde County. The species is already on the Official List as the first record was a specimen found dead near New Holland.

**Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco** (*Junco hyemalis oregonus*) (08-02). One male was seen and photographed by Luke Appling at a feeder in his yard at Beech Mountain, Watauga County, on 16 December 2007. Though there are about ten previous state reports of this subspecies listed in the Avendex database, this is the first report that has been reviewed by the Committee.

**Scott's Oriole** (*Icterus parisorum*) (08-04). A sub-adult male was seen at the feeders of Becky Duggan near Conover in Catawba County, from 29 January into February 2008. The Committee accepted the written report from Dwayne Martin and photographs taken by Will Cook, Jeff Pippen, and Harry Sell. This is the first report for the state, and acceptance of photos places the species directly onto the Official List.

## Unaccepted Sighting

The bird is judged to be a species other than that reported, or the bird is insufficiently documented to identification of the species reported.

**Common Black-Hawk** (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) (08-05). One adult was reported from the eastern piedmont in April 2008. Though it was seen at leisure by a single observer who has observed the species in Central America, and was described in moderate detail, all but one Committee member did not consider the report to be convincing, even at the genus level. The Committee felt that a single-observer sight report of a species that is essentially unknown in the eastern United States north of southern Florida was too unlikely for it to be placed onto the state's bird list. There are no state records for this species.

**Ferruginous Hawk** (*Buteo regalis*) (08-03). One was reported from a central piedmont county in February 2008. The Committee did not accept the single photo, as the image, of a hawk sitting on the ground, was not definitive enough to separate the species from a Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*). The written description also did not completely rule out a Red-tailed Hawk, which can be quite variable in plumage and is common in the area. There are no accepted state records for the Ferruginous Hawk.

**Wandering Tattler** (*Tringa incana*) (08-16). Three were reported from a beach along the central coast in September 2008. Though fairly thorough details were provided by the sole observer, the birds were not photographed. The Committee was unanimous in not accepting the report, believing that Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*) was the likely species in question. In addition, the very similar Gray-tailed Tattler (*Tringa brevipes*), as with the Wandering essentially unknown in eastern North America, was not ruled out. There are no accepted records of Wandering Tattler for the state.

**Fork-tailed Flycatcher** (*Tyrannus savana*) (08-12). One was reported from a central piedmont county in August 2008. As the report was made by a relatively inexperienced observer, birding alone, and with no photographs for documentation, the Committee did not accept the written description. However, the species is already on the Official List, with two records (from coastal areas), one of which was documented by photos.

**Bewick's Wren** (*Thryomanes bewickii*) (08-14). A report of two adults, from a foothills site in September 2008, was not accepted. This species formerly bred in the state's mountain region until about 1970, but observations in the state have essentially been non-existent since perhaps 1980, as the eastern edge of the breeding range of the species has shrunk to the western parts of Tennessee at the present time. The Committee felt that the failure to see or report several key field marks, the unlikely habitat (a steep and forested hillside), and the fact that a male was reported as singing the song pattern of a "western Bewick's Wren" seemed to suggest that Carolina Wrens (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) were involved. Even if the latter species was not involved, more conclusive documentation for a basically "extirpated" species in Atlantic coastal states was needed.



### Unaccepted Origin

The reported identification is judged to be accurate, but the origin of the bird is uncertain (and thus might not be of natural origin).

**White-cheeked Pintail** (*Anas bahamensis*) (08-08). One was well photographed in the lower Cape Fear River across from the Fort Fisher ferry landing, on 9 July 2008, by Michael Polito. Though the Committee accepted the photos as being of this species, the members were unanimous in giving a vote of “questionable origin”. The species occurs in South America and northward into the West Indies; however, it is kept in captivity, and thus the Committee was uncomfortable in placing the species on the Official List.

**Monk Parakeet** (*Myiopsitta monachus*) (08-11). One was seen, at a nest, in Farmington, Davie County, on 6 August 2008, by Phil Dickinson and Ron Morris. The Committee accepted the identification of the species from photos supplied by Dickinson; however, the Committee did not consider the bird to have been from an established breeding population. The American Birding Association (2008) has placed this non-native species on its checklist as “countable”, at least where breeding populations have been established. Some state committees have already given the species a place on their state lists as “countable”. There are a dozen or more records of the species from North Carolina, some involving birds nesting, though likely not for a length of time to establish “countable” populations. However, the Committee has not reviewed these older records, and thus this species is not yet on the North Carolina Official or Provisional lists. The Committee will be working, hopefully with the South Carolina Bird Records Committee, to establish more specific rules and guidelines for acceptance of exotic (non-native) species to the appropriate state lists.

### Discussion

The review of reports by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee for 2008 resulted in adding one species, Scott’s Oriole, to the state’s Official List. The current Official List is now 453 species, and the Provisional List is 14 species, for a total of 467 species on the state’s Accepted List.

### Acknowledgments

In addition to the many people named above who provided written material and photographs for the Committee to review, we thank Kent Fiala (webmaster of the Carolina Bird Club) for placing a number of the photographs on the club’s website for Committee review and sending electronic submission of Rare Bird Report forms to the Committee chair.

### Literature Cited

American Birding Association. 2008. ABA Checklist Update. Retrieved 14 Feb 2009 from <http://www.aba.org/checklist/abachecklist.pdf>.

## General Field Notes

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*General Field Notes briefly report such items as rare sightings, unusual behaviors, significant nesting records, or summaries of such items.*

*First, second, or third sightings of species in either state must be submitted to the appropriate Bird Records Committee prior to publication in The Chat.*

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### **Observation of Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) Post-fledging Parental Care in Hampton County, South Carolina**

**Maria A. Whitehead<sup>1</sup> and David Jones<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> *The Nature Conservancy, PO Box 20246, Charleston, SC 29413*

<sup>2</sup> *702 Old House Road, Ridgeland, SC 29936*

On 6 August 2008, David Jones observed adult Swallow-tailed Kites (*Elanoides forficatus*) feeding an immature (Fig. 1) at his farm in Hampton County, SC (32° 47' 19.973" N, 80° 59' 16.931" W). The young kite was fed six times while beg calling. Jones believes that he observed feeding by two different adults. In South Carolina, most young have fledged the nests by mid- to late-June. Assuming this immature bird fledged within the normal breeding cycle for Swallow-tailed Kites, it may have been between 6 to 8 weeks old. It is still not clear when young Swallow-tailed Kites become fully independent and parental care ceases (Meyer and Collopy 1990, Meyer 1993). In southwest Florida, young kites leave the nest area at 2 to 12 weeks post-fledging. Upon leaving natal territories in Florida, immature kites have been observed with adults and occasionally being fed by adults, but usually foraged on their own. There are few if any examples of parental care in South Carolina during the pre-migratory/migratory period after the kites have left natal breeding territories (John Cely pers comm).

#### **Literature Cited**

- Meyer, K. D. and M. W. Collopy. 1990. Status, distribution, and habitat requirements of the American Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus forficatus*) in Florida. Final report, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Comm., Tallahassee, FL.
- Meyer, K. D. 1993. Communal roosts of the American Swallow-tailed Kite in Florida: habitat associations, critical sites, and a technique for monitoring population status. Final report, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Comm., Tallahassee, FL.



Figure 1. Swallow-tailed Kite adult feeding young 6 Aug 2008. Photo by David Jones

## **Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) on Lake Hickory**

**Dwayne Martin**

*1557 16th Ave NE, Hickory, NC, 28601*

On September 30, 2003 at 18:30, while scanning parts of lower Lake Hickory from Dusty Ridge Access area in Alexander County, North Carolina, I found a gull on the lake. This seemed unusual at first because gulls are not normally there that early in the year. The gull was approximately 300 yards out sitting on the open water nearer to the Catawba County side of the lake. I set up my scope (Leica 77) on the gull. The first thing I noticed was the brown color around the neck that extended to the back and wings of the gull. It appeared to be a small gull. I had an idea of what the gull was, but I wanted to get a few more markings. Soon a boat passed near the gull and it took flight. It flew very much like a tern—bouncy in flight. As the gull flew it came somewhat closer and then banked, showing its back and tail. The tail was forked and the back had the “V” pattern of a Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*). The bird was a juvenile because of the brown coloration. The brown coloration started at the point of the mid-wing and extended down to the tail and back up to the mid-wing on the other side and covered the whole back. The Sabine's Gull flew around for a few more minutes and then landed back on the water near the original spot at which it was found.



I called Lori Martin to come help confirm the sighting. It stayed in the same general spot until she arrived. She also agreed as to the identification of the gull. Word of the gull was put on the Carolinabirds e-mail list. Over the next seven days over 60 birders saw the gull. The gull was photographed from a boat by Dwayne Martin and Wayne Forsythe on October 7, 2003, the last day the gull was seen.

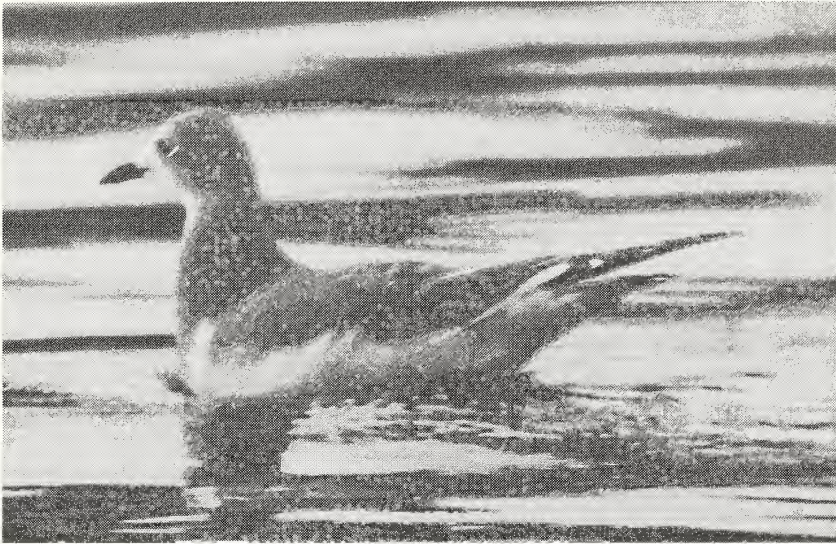


Figure 1. Sabine's Gull, 7 October 2003, Lake Hickory. Photo by Wayne Forsythe.

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## Fifty Years Ago in *The Chat*—March 1959

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The March 1959 issue of *The Chat* was the first under the editorship of Charles H. Blake, of Hillsborough, NC, replacing Kay Sisson of Columbia, SC. B. R. Chamberlain reviewed the 1958 Christmas Bird Count in the Carolinas, noting that except for the count of about a half million roosting blackbirds and starlings at Greensboro, the total count of individuals was little better than two-thirds of the previous year's count. The species total was 169; the 1957 count had had 183 species. The difference was attributed to poor birding weather and slightly decreased participation. Eastern Phoebe showed a marked decline from the previous year, from 175 to 47. Eastern Bluebirds declined from 1450 to 961; over one-third of the 1958 bluebirds were on the Greensboro count. The Charlotte, NC count summary noted that "Cover and food content of open water areas greatly reduced by continuing development." In General Field Notes, a report on wildfowl wintering at Mattamuskeet listed Canada Goose as by far the most abundant species, while Tundra Swan (then called Whistling Swan) was one of the least abundant. A sight record of Lark Bunting near Fayetteville, NC, on 7 July 1958 was reported.— *Kent Fiala, editor*



Bobolink, 3 Oct 2008, Fort Caswell, NC. Photo by John Ennis.





Sedge Wren, 3 Jan 2009, Bear Island Wildlife Management Area, SC. Photo by Steve Kilpatrick.

## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Fall 2008, unless otherwise noted)

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*Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.*

Winter	December 1–February 28	due March 20
Spring	March 1–May 31	due June 20
Summer	June 1–July 31	due August 20
Fall	August 1–November 30	due December 20

*Reports can be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you type them and list the sightings according to the birds in checklist order (not according to dates or locations). If you submit your report to me through e-mail, please type your report directly into the message or copy it from a word processing program directly into the message. You may also attach your file to the e-mail, but if you do, please let me know the program used and also send a second version saved as a text (.txt) file.*

*Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.*

*Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.*

*I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.*

*If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.*

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** Becoming less rare in the Carolinas due to northward wandering of the Florida population, this species was present throughout the period at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, with a high count of 23 made 8 Aug (Steve Calver).

**Snow Goose:** The earliest report of this coastal winter visitor was a flock seen during the "Big Sit" at Pea Island NWR, NC, 12 Oct (Jeff Lewis).

Locally unusual were dark-morph individuals at Alligator River NWR, NC, 8 Nov (Brian Bockhahn) and at the goose ponds in Garysburg, NC, 15 Nov (Frank Enders). Also locally unusual was a white-morph individual in Beaufort, NC, 23 Nov through the end of the period (Jim & Holly Powell). Rare in the mountains, five (four dark-morph and one white-morph) were at the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in Henderson Co, NC, 30 Nov (Wayne Forsythe).

**Ross's Goose:** The only definite report was of four at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, NC, 23 Nov (Ricky Davis).

**Snow/Ross's Goose:** A goose on South Pond, Pea Island NWR, NC, 20 Sep (Kent Fiala) was either a Snow or a Ross's, and early for either species.

**Brant:** Unusual away from the Hatteras/Ocracoke Inlet area, one was on South Pond, Pea Island NWR, NC, 26 Oct (Ricky Davis); two were on South Pond during the Wings over Water Festival in early November (*fide* Davis); and two were near Pelican Island, W of Oregon Inlet, NC, 8 Nov (Brian Bockhahn).

**Cackling Goose:** The only report this fall was of four to six at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 11 Nov (Christian Newton).

**Tundra Swan:** Locally abundant in the coastal plain during winter, the farthest inland sighting was one at Jordan Lake, NC, 19 Nov (Nick Anich).

**Eurasian Wigeon:** A rare stray from Europe, a few are usually seen each winter. The earliest report was of one on North Pond, Pea Island NWR, NC, 22 Oct (Jeff Lewis). Up to three were seen on South Pond, Pea Island NWR, NC, during the Wings over Water Festival, 8 Nov (*fide* Jeff Lewis). One was a good find, on Lilliput Pond, New Bern, NC, 25 Nov through the end of the period (Al Gamache).

**Mottled Duck:** More common in the southern part of our region, this species was present throughout the period at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, with a high count of 692 tallied 8 Aug (Steve Calver). In North Carolina, two returned to Lake Medcalf (presumably the same birds seen previously but absent for several months) in Sunset Beach, 20 Sep (Mary McDavit, John Ennis).

**Lesser Scaup:** One was early at Bear Island WMA, SC, 16 Aug (Jason Giovannone).

**Common Eider:** A female found during a survey of the New River Inlet, North Topsail Beach, NC, 5 Aug (Greg Massey, Dawn York) was decidedly out-of-season.

**White-winged Scoter:** Inland sightings of this ocean duck included a female on Lake Hickory, NC, 19 Nov (Dwayne Martin, Monroe Pannell) and four on Jordan Lake, NC, 29 Nov (Derb Carter).

**Black Scoter:** A flock of 16, seen during a survey of the New River Inlet, North Topsail Beach, NC, was quite early on 5 Aug (Greg Massey).

**Long-tailed Duck:** Uncommon outside the Pamlico Sound, one was found near the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center, during the Wings over Water Festival, 9 Nov (Ricky Davis). The only inland report was of a female at Jordan Lake, NC, 19 Nov (Nick Anich) and 26 Nov (Josh Southern).



**Common Goldeneye:** Females of this uncommon duck in the Carolinas were seen over the ocean at Wrightsville Beach, NC, 12 Nov (Dean Edwards) and visiting a pond in Meggett, SC, 21–26 Nov (Cherrie Sneed).

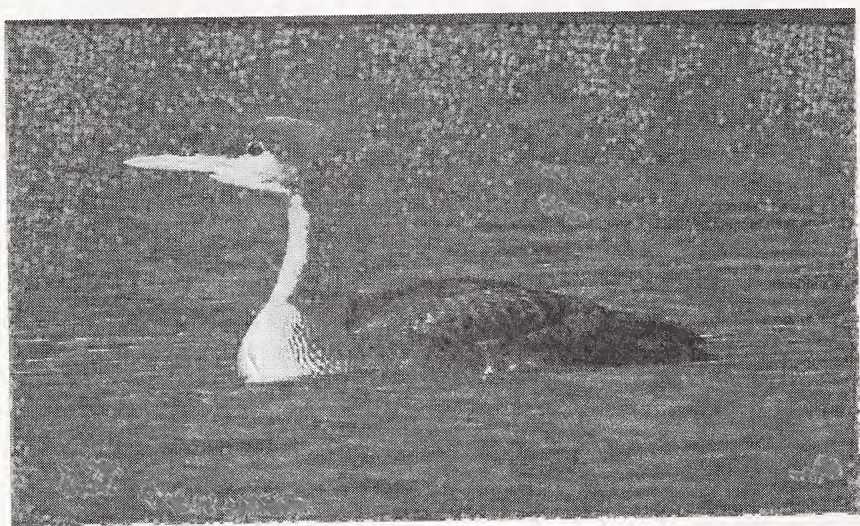
**Common Merganser:** The only report this fall was of a female at Eaton's Ferry, Lake Gaston, NC, 22 Nov (Ricky Davis).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** 15 on Lake Julian, NC, 29 Nov (Wayne Forsythe) was a good count for a location so far from the coast.

**Ruddy Duck:** Early reports included one in Mt Pleasant, SC, 3 Aug (Charles Boyce) and one at Salem Lake, Winston-Salem, NC, 16 Sep (John Haire).

**Red-throated Loon:** The only inland sightings of this species, which is typically found on the ocean, were one on Falls Lake, NC, 16 Nov (Ricky Davis) and one on Roanoke Rapids Lake, NC, 22 Nov (Davis).

**Pacific Loon:** One discovered at Lake Townsend, NC, 18 Nov (Henry Link, Scott DePue, George Wheaton) was seen by many through the end of the period.



Pacific Loon, 23 Nov 2008, Lake Townsend, Greensboro, NC. Photo by Henry Link.

**Red-necked Grebe:** The only report this fall was of a juvenile at the pier on Folly Island, SC, 1 Nov (Chris Snook).

**Eared Grebe:** Three were found at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 12 Sep, with a high count of seven there by 26 Nov (Steve Calver). Two returned to the WTP in Goldsboro, NC, 13 Sep (Eric Dean, Gene Howe) and were observed through the end of the period. Two, one in breeding plumage, were photographed on Salem Lake, Winston-Salem, NC, 17 Sep (John Haire). One was seen at Pine Island Audubon Sanctuary, NC, 7 Nov (Brian Bockhahn).



**Herald (Trinidad) Petrel:** Two were seen on pelagic trips from Hatteras, NC, a dark-morph on 25 Aug and a “darker light-morph” on 21 Sep (Brian Patteson, Inc).

**Red-billed Tropicbird:** One was seen this fall, a juvenile, 18 miles SE of Hatteras inlet, NC, 7 Oct (Brian Patteson).

**Masked Booby:** One was seen this fall, on a pelagic trip from Hatteras, NC, 23 Aug (Brian Patteson, Inc).

**Brown Booby:** One was found on the beach in Surfside, SC, and taken to a rehabilitator, after the passage of Hurricane Hanna, 6 Sep (*fide* Chris Hill).

**American White Pelican:** More than 40 were seen at Bear Island WMA, SC, 6 Sep, (Carroll Richard, Diane Rand). Pea Island NWR, NC, had its earliest report, one on 26 Sep (David Smith), and 18 were there by 8 Nov (Ricky Davis). A flock was present throughout the period at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC; a high count of 301 was made 30 Sep (Steve Calver). Six birds were at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, by 17 Oct (John Connors).

**Great Cormorant:** A species typically exclusive to the winter coast, one was both early and inland, where it was well-photographed, at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 2 Sep (Jeff Lewis). Other inland sightings included individuals at High Rock Dam, Stanly Co, NC, 21 Oct (*fide* Nick Anich) and at Falls Lake, NC, 26 Nov (Brian Bockhahn).

**Anhinga:** The westernmost sighting was made at Lake Brandt, Greensboro, NC, 3 Aug (Henry Link, George Wheaton). The species was present throughout the period at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC; a high count of 205 was made 8 Aug (Steve Calver).

**Magnificent Frigatebird:** An adult female was seen over Beaufort, NC, after the passage of Hurricane Hanna, 6 Sep (Annie Gorgone, *fide* John Fussell).

**American Bittern:** Uncommon away from the coast, two were found in the mountains this fall—one at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, 31 Oct through the end of the period (Ron Selvey, et al) and one at Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC, 2 Nov (Vin Stanton).

**Least Bittern:** The last reports of summering birds were two at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 27 Aug (Steve Calver) and one at the wetlands near the WTP in Goldsboro, NC, 13 Sep (Eric Dean).

**“Great White” Heron:** Presumably the same bird reported in July returned to Charles D. Owen Park, Asheville, NC, 7 Aug (Janie Owens).



Great Cormorant 2 Sep 2008, Lake Mattamuskeet NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis

Another, possibly the same bird, was observed repeatedly in Avery Co, NC, from the beginning of the period through at least 7 Oct (Curtis Smalling).

**Tricolored Heron:** Rare away from the coast, one was found far inland, at the Coddle Creek Reservoir, Cabarrus Co, NC, 14 Aug (Alan Kneidel).

**Reddish Egret:** Post-breeding dispersal, during late summer/early fall, brings the best numbers of this species to the Carolinas. Many were reported this period, as usual, all of the dark-morph. One was at Bear Island WMA, SC, 5–16 Aug (Jason Giovannone). One was seen between Pivers Island and Carrot Island, Beaufort, NC, 13 Aug (Scott McGregor) and 15 Aug (John Fussell). One was near the jetty at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 10 Aug (Stephen Thomas) and two were there 28 Aug (Paul Serridge). Four were seen on Shackleford Banks, NC, 1 Sep (Wade Fuller). A high count of six was made at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 5 Sep, with one continuing until 17 Oct (Steve Calver). An immature was at the W end of Oak Island, NC, 7–28 Sep (John Ennis). Four (one adult and three juveniles) were seen on Bear Island, Hammocks Beach SP, NC, 27 Sep (Derb Carter, Zach Thompson) and 28 Sep (Will Cook). Two were found on Cape Island, Charleston, SC, 4 Oct (David Abbott). Late sightings included one at the N end of Portsmouth Island, 11 Nov (Mike Johnson), and a juvenile at Hilton Head, SC, 28 Nov (David Lovett).

**Cattle Egret:** An impressive count of 500 was made in a private field N of Maxton, Robeson Co, NC, 18 Sep (Harry LeGrand).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** The species was present throughout the period at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC; a high count of 136 was made 26 Nov (Steve Calver).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** A rare transient through the mountains, an adult was found at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, 18 Sep (Ron Selvey, Wayne Forsythe, John Lindfors). Late individuals included one in Morehead City, NC, 20 Nov (John Fussell) and a juvenile near the North River, Carteret Co, NC, 30 Nov (Fussell).

**White Ibis:** The westernmost sightings were a juvenile on Huff Island, Madison Co, NC, 7 Aug (Jeff Beane, et al.); a juvenile, a first park record, at Riverbend Park, Conover, NC, 10–24 Aug (Dwayne Martin); and a juvenile in Monroe, NC, 28 Aug (Anne Olsen).

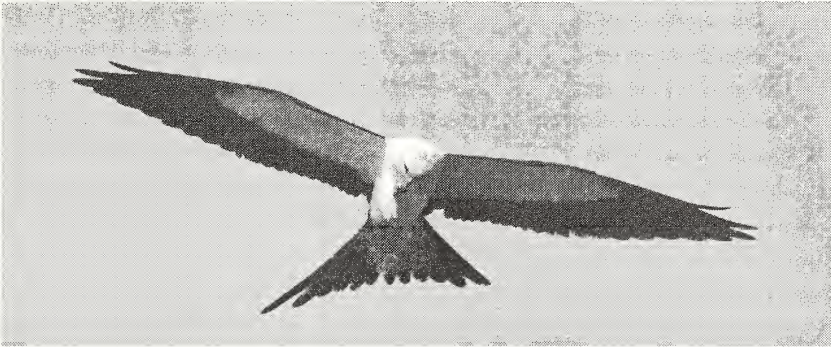
**Glossy Ibis:** A good inland count of 36+ was made near the Vernon James Research Center in Roper, NC, 6 Aug (Don Rote). One was well away from the coast, at Lake Townsend, Greensboro, NC, 8 Aug (Henry Link).

**Plegadis Ibis:** A juvenile of the genus *Plegadis* was well-photographed at the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center, Dare Co, NC during the Wings over Water Festival, 7–9 Nov (Ricky Davis, Kent Fiala, Jeff Lewis, et al). Due to its ambiguous plumage and soft colors, it's not certain if the ibis was a Glossy or a White-faced.

**Roseate Spoonbill:** This species was seen throughout the period at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, with a high count of 78 made 8 Aug (Steve Calver). The only other report was of three in Beaufort, SC 22 Aug (Buddy Campbell).

**Wood Stork:** A good inland count of 62 was made at Lake Greenwood, Laurens Co, SC, 31 Aug (Jacquelyn Burns). An adult was found at the inland site of Falls Lake, NC, 1 Sep (Bruce Young). Sixteen juveniles were seen in a private field N of Maxton, Robeson Co, NC, 18 Sep (Harry LeGrand). A good count of 123 birds was tallied at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 28 Sep (Bob Maxwell), with two or three remaining 23 Nov (Stephen Thomas). The species was present throughout the period at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC; a high count of 415 was made on 17 Oct (Steve Calver).

**Swallow-tailed Kite:** Three were found over a private field near Hoffman, NC, 9 Aug (Brady Beck, Scott Hartley). Two were observed over a field along NC-73 in S Lincoln Co, NC, 9–12 Aug (Betty O’Leary, et al). A high count of 50 was tallied over the fields in Allendale Co, SC, 10 Aug (Sparkle Clark). One was seen near Seagrove, NC, 19 Sep (Jeremy Reiskind, *fide* John Haire).



Swallow-tailed Kite, 10 Aug 2008, Allendale, SC. Photo by Jerry Bright.

**Bald Eagle:** Locally unusual was an adult in the urban area of downtown Raleigh, NC, 30 Oct (John Connors).

**Northern Harrier:** The earliest report of this winter resident was of one near the Vernon James Research Center, Roper, NC, 21 Aug (Dave Lenat).

**Northern Goshawk:** Two were seen this fall—a juvenile flying just N of Old Oxford Hwy, Durham Co, NC 15 Oct (Mike Tove) and an adult visiting a yard in Beaufort, NC, 28 Nov (Rich & Susan Boyd).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** A high count of 6260 was tallied at the Caesars Head, SC, Hawk Watch, 21 Sep (Jeff Catlin).

**Swainson’s Hawk:** An immature dark-phase was well-seen, flying over a residential area, in Wilmington, NC, 25 Oct (Sam & Denise Cooper).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** Light-morph individuals were seen at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 26 Oct (John Fussell, et al) and at Alligator River NWR, NC, during the Wings over Water Festival, 8 Nov (*fide* Jeff Lewis).

**Golden Eagle:** There was a higher-than-usual number of Golden Eagle sightings in the Carolinas this past fall, with seven birds reported. The first report was from the Caesars Head, SC, Hawk Watch, 20 Sep (Jeff Catlin).



Two individuals were seen at different sites 19 Oct—an adult at Botany Bay WMA, SC (Michael Bernard) and a sub-adult in Sneads Ferry, NC (Gil Grant). One was seen flying over James Island, SC, 28 Oct (Dennis Forsythe). Three individuals were found at different sites 23 Nov—a juvenile soaring with Bald Eagles at Lake Landing, Lake Mattamuskeet, NC (Ricky Davis), an adult flying over a farm in Watauga Co, NC (Merrill Lynch), and an adult flying over a farm in Piney Creek, NC (James Coman). Though the last two sites are only 60 miles apart, these were probably different birds as the observations took place only 80 minutes apart.

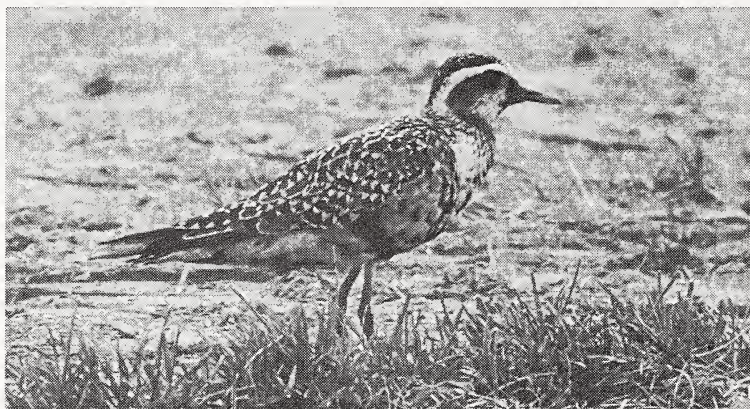
**Peregrine Falcon:** Urban Peregrines included one returning to the Hilton in downtown Charlotte, NC, for the third winter in a row, 13 Oct (Ron & Anne Clark) and one returning to the Wachovia building in downtown Winston-Salem, NC, present two winters ago but not last winter, 21 Nov (John Haire).

**Yellow Rail:** A very hard-to-see species, one was seen in the rice fields near the Vernon James Research Center, Roper, NC, 11 Oct (Don Rote).

**Sora:** One was quite early, near the Vernon James Research Center, Roper, NC, 3 Aug, posing the possibility that breeding occurred in the area.

**Purple Gallinule:** A high count of 20, including chicks, was tallied during a local Audubon society field trip to the Savannah NWR, Jasper Co, SC, 16 Aug (Sandy Beasley, et al). In North Carolina, where this species has become quite rare, an adult was seen on private land near Columbia, Tyrrell Co, 17 Aug (Jennifer Morse, *vide* Jeff Pippen).

**Sandhill Crane:** Reports of birds in flight included six headed S over Hilton Head, SC, 23 Sep (Royce Hough); one over Wilmington, NC, 15 Oct (Sam Cooper); and six headed N over Buxton, NC, 18 Nov (Marcia Lyons, *vide* Jeff Lewis).



American Golden-Plover, 1 Sep 2008, Hooper Lane. Photo by Wayne Forsythe.

**American Golden-Plover:** An uncommon but regular fall migrant through the Carolinas, most are found in grassy areas, such as sod farms and dry mudflats. One was seen at North Topsail Beach, NC, during a survey of

the New River Inlet, 5 Aug (Greg Massey). Three were at the Cedar Island, NC, Ferry Terminal, 29 Aug (John Voigt, Sally Carter). Six were at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 31 Aug (Ricky Davis). Five were found at Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 1 Sep (Wayne Forsythe). One was at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 7 Sep (John Fussell, et al). Several were seen at the Turbeville, SC, sod farm 7 Sep (Steve Tracey). Three were at Nimmer's Sod Farm, Ridgeland, SC, 21 Sep (Royce Hough). A late individual was found during the Wings over Water Festival, near Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 8 Nov (Taylor Piephoff).

**Snowy Plover:** A very rare visitor to the Carolinas, three were seen this period. In South Carolina, one was photographed at Beachwalker Park on Kiawah Island, 24 Aug (Cathy Miller). In North Carolina, one, probably the same bird seen here in the summer, was reported from the S end of Ocracoke Island, NC, 17 Sep (Sidney Maddock). Another, probably the same bird reported here 21 July, was seen on Bear Island, Hammocks Beach SP, NC, 22 Sep (Alexandra Houston, Emily Rice) through at least 28 Sep (Will Cook). The two NC sightings constitute the fourth and fifth documented state records, assuming these sightings are of the same two birds reported from their respective sites earlier in the year.

**American Avocet:** A high count of 1120 was tallied at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 12 Nov (Steve Calver). A good inland count of 65 was made at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 22 Nov (Jeff Lewis).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** A high count of 850 was made at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 7 Sep (Ricky Davis).

**Upland Sandpiper:** An uncommon but regular fall migrant, most are found in grassy areas, such as sod farms and airports. Four were at the Super Sod Farm in Orangeburg, SC, 2 Aug (Dennis Forsythe) and three still there 17 Aug (Cherrie Sneed). One was found at the Turbeville, SC, Sod Farm, 4 Aug (Forsythe) and again 6 Sep (Jason Giovannone). Two to three were seen at the Vernon James Research Center, Roper, NC, 6 Aug (Don Rote) and five were there 1 Sep (Rote). A high count of eight was made at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 17 Aug (John Fussell, et al). One was found at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 22–27 Aug (Steve Calver). One was seen at the airport in Manteo, NC, 23 Aug (Derb Carter, Ricky Davis, Harry LeGrand). Two were reported 27 Aug—one at Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 27 Aug (Stanley Wulkowicz) and another at River's Edge Park, Wilkesboro, NC (Jack Ogburn).



Upland Sandpiper 11 Aug 2008, Orangeburg SC. Photo by Stephen Thomas



**Whimbrel:** Unusual was one inland, at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 2 Sep (Jeff Lewis).

**Long-billed Curlew:** Always noteworthy in the Carolinas, three were seen on Cape Island, Charleston, SC, 4 Oct (David Abbott) and one was found on the Topsail Sound, NC, 22 Sep (Zach Thompson).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** One was observed at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 31 Aug through 28 Sep (Ricky Davis, Dave Lenat). One, at the Carolina Sod Farm, Wilmington, NC, 6 Sep, was a first for the area (Greg Massey). One, seemingly injured, was found in New Field, Pea Island NWR, NC, 1 Nov (Jeff Lewis). During the Wings over Water Festival, up to three individuals were seen—one, presumably the same bird, at Pea Island NWR, NC, 6–9 Nov (Ricky Davis, Lewis, et al); one on the lawn of the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center, NC, 7–9 Nov (Davis, Steve Schultz); and one at the Cape Hatteras campground, Buxton, NC, 8 Nov (Taylor Piephoff).



Hudsonian Godwit, 1 Nov 2008, Pea Island NWR. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

**Marbled Godwit:** Uncommon away from the coast, six were found at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 31 Aug (Ricky Davis) with four remaining 22 Nov (Davis). An impressive high count of 115 was made at North Pond, Pea Island NWR, NC, 16 Oct (Jacob Socolar).

**Red Knot:** Rare away from the coast, four were found at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 7 Sep (Ricky Davis).

**Sanderling:** The westernmost reports were of one at Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 26 Aug (Wayne Forsythe, et al); two at Jordan Lake, NC, after the passage of Hurricane Hanna, 7 Sep (Nathan Swick); and one in a parking lot in Forest City, NC, 17 Sep (*vide* Len Kopka).

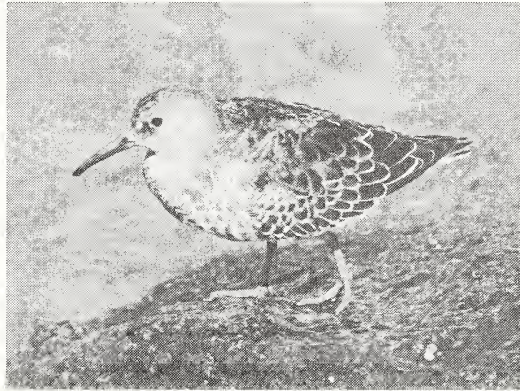
**White-rumped Sandpiper:** An uncommon and sometimes hard-to-identify peep, a high count of 22 was made at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 31 Aug (Ricky Davis).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** This rare migrant was found at five different sites this fall. Three were seen at Falls Lake, NC, 26 Aug (Dave Lenat) and two were there 28 Aug (Derb Carter, *fide* Ricky Davis). One was found on Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 28 Aug (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey). One was seen at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 31 Aug (Davis). One was found at the Turbeville, SC, sod farm, 1 Sep (Jason Giovannone) with two there 19 Sep (Dennis Forsythe). One was found at the Carolina Sod Farm, Wilmington, NC, 6 Sep (Greg Massey), providing the first record for the area.

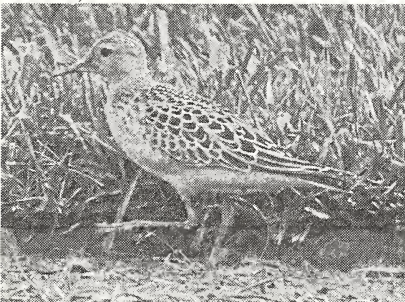
**Pectoral Sandpiper:** 50+, an impressive number for the mountains, were counted at Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 28 Aug (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey). A high count of 750 was made at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 7 Sep (Ricky Davis).

**Purple Sandpiper:**

One was quite early, on the jetty at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 2 Oct (David & Susan Disher). A juvenile was photographed near the boat ramp at Ft Fisher, NC, 28 Oct (John Ennis). One was seen on a drain pipe near Pelican Island, W of Oregon Inlet, NC, 7 Nov (Brian Bockhahn). One was on the end of the groin at Oregon Inlet, NC, 8 Nov (Jeff Lewis). A juvenile was on the groin at Folly Island, SC, 9 Nov (Chris Snook). Two were on the jetty at Ft Macon, NC, 19 Nov (John Fussell).



Purple Sandpiper, 2 Oct 2008, Huntington Beach SP, SC. Photo by David Disher.



Buff-breasted Sandpiper, 1 Sep 2008, Henderson Co., NC. Photo by Wayne Forsythe.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** An uncommon fall migrant through the Carolinas, most are found in grassy areas such as sod farms and dry mudflats. Three were seen at the American Sod Farm, Creswell, NC, 23 Aug (Derb Carter, Ricky Davis, Harry LeGrand). Three were found on Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 28 Aug (Wayne Forsythe). Several were at the sod farm in Turbeville, SC, 31 Aug (David



Dobson) and 7 Sep (Steve Tracey). One was seen at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 5 Sep (Steve Calver). One was at the Cedar Island, NC, Ferry Terminal, 7 Sep (John Fussell, et al). One was photographed at River's Edge Park, Wilkesboro, NC, 10–12 Sep (Jack Ogburn). A high count of seven was made at Nimmer's Sod Farm, Ridgeland, SC, 21 Sep (Royce Hough). One was also at the Super Sod Farm, Orangeburg, SC, 26 Sep (Hough).

**Ruff:** There were two sightings of this rare Eurasian stray this fall, both at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 1 Aug and 27 Aug (Steve Calver).



Ruff, 1 Aug 2008, Savannah Spoil Site, SC. Photo by Steve Calver.

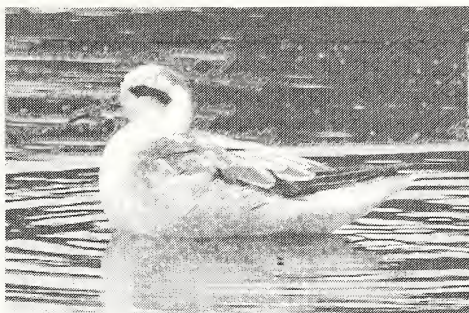
**Wilson's Phalarope:** A rare but regular fall migrant, a high count of 23 made at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 15 Aug, with two continuing until 30 Sep (Steve Calver). One was found at Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 26 Aug (Wayne Forsythe, et al). One was seen at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 1 Sep (Ricky Davis) and five were there 9 Sep (Dave Lenat). One was found at the sod farm in Turbeville, SC, 7 Sep (Steve Tracey).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** There were multiple sightings of this species after the passage of Hurricane Hanna, 6 Sep—four in the Bogue Sound off Morehead City, NC (John Fussell); eight to ten at Fort Moultrie, Charleston, SC (Shawn Hayes); 41 at Lake Waccamaw, NC (Greg Massey, et al); and a high count of 51 at Buckhorn Reservoir, Wilson Co, NC (Ricky Davis). Non-hurricane-related sightings included five at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 27 Aug, with one continuing until 19 Sep (Steve Calver); one

at Charles D Owen Park, Asheville, NC, 14 Sep (Tom Tribble); one, well-photographed, at the Archie Elledge WTP, Winston-Salem, NC, 27–28 Aug (John Haire, et al); and one at the Salt Pond at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 25 Sep (David Smith).

**Red Phalarope:** There were two Hurricane Hanna-related sightings on 6 Sep—one at Lake Waccamaw, NC (Greg Massey, et al) and two at Buckhorn Reservoir, Wilson Co, NC (Ricky Davis).

**Sabine's Gull:** A first-year bird was well-photographed at Lake Norman, Mecklenburg Co and Lincoln Co, NC, 12 Sep (David & Marcia Wright, Jeff Lemons). The bird was observed for about an hour and not seen again.



Red-necked Phalarope, 27 Aug 2008, Winston-Salem, NC. Photo by John Haire.

Remarkably, this sighting provides the third record for Mecklenburg County.

**Black-headed Gull:** Only one was reported this fall, a first-winter bird at the WTP in Goldsboro, NC, 1–3 Nov (Eric Dean, Gene Howe).

**Franklin's Gull:** There were two reports of this Great Plains gull in the Carolinas this fall. A first-winter bird was at Buckhorn Reservoir, Wilson Co, NC, 14 Oct (Ricky Davis) and a flock of seven (!) first-year birds were photographed on Lake Junaluska, NC, 9 Nov (Stan & Connie Wulkowicz).



Sabine's Gull, 12 Sep 2008, Lake Norman, NC. Photo by David B. Wright.

**Sooty Tern:** A high count of 187 was tallied on a pelagic trip from Hatteras, NC, 23 Aug (Brian Patteson, Inc). All non-pelagic reports occurred shortly after the passage of Hurricane Hanna, 6 Sep, unless otherwise noted. Exhausted/injured birds were found in Sneads Ferry, NC (Gilbert Grant); Beaufort, NC (Barbie Byrd); and Calabash, NC (*fide* John Ennis). Active birds included 12 over the Bogue Sound off Morehead City, NC (John Fussell); three at Buckhorn Reservoir, Wilson Co, NC (Ricky Davis); and three at Jordan Lake, NC (Mike Schultz) continuing to 7 Sep (Nick Anich).

**Bridled Tern:** One was found on East Beach, Bald Head Island, NC, 27 Aug (Maureen Dewire). Reports following the passage of Hurricane Hanna, 6 Sep, included three over the Bogue Sound off Morehead City, NC (John Fussell); three at Lake Waccamaw, NC (Greg Massey); and two at Jordan Lake, NC (Mike Schultz) continuing to 7 Sep (Nick Anich).

**Black Tern:** A regular fall migrant through the Carolinas, more common on the coast, a high count of 477 was tallied at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 27 Aug (Steve Calver).



**Common Tern:** Best counts for inland lakes were 50 at Salem Lake, Winston-Salem, NC, 16 Sep (John Haire) and 58+ at the S end of Lake Norman, NC, 17 Sep (David & Marcia Wright, Taylor Piephoff).

**Black Skimmer:** A hurricane-blown bird was found standing in US-117, Goldsboro, NC, 6 Sep (Gene Howe, Eric Dean).

**Pomarine Jaeger:** A good count of four or five was tallied on a pelagic trip from Hatteras, NC, 21 Sep (Brian Patteson, Inc).

**Parasitic Jaeger:** First reported 25 Jul, the individual on Bear Island, Hammocks Beach SP, NC, continued to at least 28 Sep (Will Cook). One was seen flying over the ocean from Rodanthe, NC, 6 Nov (Jeff Pippen). Three to six were seen from Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 8 Nov (Taylor Piephoff). One was seen over the ocean from Wrightsville Beach, NC, 9 Nov (Dean Edwards).

**Long-tailed Jaeger:** Off Hatteras, NC, individual juveniles were seen 23 Aug and 26 Aug, and two juveniles were seen on a pelagic trip 21 Sep (Brian Patteson, Inc).

**White-winged Dove:** There were two reports of this species this fall, both from the coast of North Carolina. One was photographed at a feeder in North Topsail Beach, NC, 1–2 Aug (Robert & Connie Shertz). The other was seen around the parking area of the Aquarium at Ft Fisher, NC, 29 Oct (Derb Carter) and 1 Nov (Ricky Davis).

**Monk Parakeet:** One was discovered building a nest on a power pole in Farmington, Davie Co, NC, 6 Aug (Phil Dickinson, Ron Morris). This bird is not on the official NC bird list and its origin, as with all parakeets, is questionable.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** At least 17, a high concentration for this species, were counted on a farm in Piney Creek, NC, 10 Aug (James Coman).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** A high count of at least five was made on a farm in Piney Creek, NC, 10 Aug (James Coman). A juvenile was found at Lake Waccamaw NWR, SC, 24 Sep (Jack Peachey).

**Barn Owl:** One was found during the Wings over Water Festival's "Owl Prowl" at Alligator River NWR, NC, 5 Nov (Brian Bockhahn). Also, one was found dead on the roadside near Bethel, NC, 15 Oct (Alan Meijer).

**Common Nighthawk:** One, seen flying and calling over western Greensboro, NC, was quite late, 17 Oct (Henry Link).

**Chimney Swift:** One was somewhat late in Charlotte, NC, 20 Oct (Thomas Sanders).

**Broad-billed Hummingbird:** An adult male, the same banded bird that wintered in the Charleston area last year, spent the entire period in a yard in New Bern, NC (Susan Campbell, John Ennis, et al). This bird provides the third documented state record.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Notably, a bird banded in Riverbend Park, Conover, NC, 30 Sep, was recaptured twelve days later in Rockport, TX, 12 Oct (*vide* Dwayne Martin).

**Black-chinned Hummingbird:** A female visited a yard in Conway, SC, 19–20 Sep (Gary Phillips). Another female was banded at a feeder in New Bern, NC, 23 Nov, and continued into December (Susan Campbell, et al).

**Rufous Hummingbird:** A rare winter visitor to the Carolinas, several were reported at feeders this fall. A male (presumably the same bird as last winter) returned early to a yard in north Raleigh, NC, 16 Aug (*fide* Susan Campbell). An adult male (presumably the same bird as in the last four winters) returned early to a yard in Morehead City, NC, 15 Aug (Carol Reigle, *fide* John Fussell). A juvenile male visited a yard in Conway, SC, 6 Nov through the end of the period (Gary Phillips). One returned to a yard in Pinchurst, NC, 8 Nov (*fide* Susan Campbell). A female visited a feeder in Clemson, SC, 13–19 Nov (Katie Fenlon). Dwayne Martin banded a juvenile female at a feeder in northeast Hickory, NC, 19 Nov. One was also seen at a feeder in Charlotte, NC, 20 Nov (Rob Bierregaard).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** One stuck around for a few days at Lake Katherine, Reynolda Gardens, Winston-Salem, NC, 25–28 Aug (Kim Brand, John Haire, Phil Dickinson). One was seen along the Greenway in Lenoir, NC, 3 Sep (Dwayne Martin, Alisha Hayes). One was found at Doughton Park, Alleghany Co, NC, 21 Sep (Ricky Davis). One was seen at Riverbend Park, Conover, NC, 27 Sep (Martin, Lori Owenby) and 28 Sep (Ron & Garnet Underwood).

**Wood-Pewee, sp.:** A late migrant was found on the north dike of North Pond, Pea Island NWR, NC, during the Wings over Water Festival, 9 Nov (John Fussell, et al). The bird did not vocalize, nor respond to recordings, thus could not be certainly identified as Eastern or Western.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:**

This uncommon transient was found at Fletcher Park, NC, 7 Sep (Vin Stanton); seen multiple times at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, 8 Sep through 1 Oct (John Lindfors, Ron Selvey, Vin Stanton) with a high count of three on 18 Sep (Wayne Forsythe); heard in a residential yard in Wilmington, NC, 16 Sep (Greg Massey); and found at Bethabara Park, Winston-Salem, NC 18 Sep (Ferenc Domoki).

**Willow Flycatcher.** Rare coastal sightings included an *Empidonax*, heard calling, that was probably a Willow, in Manteo, NC, 16 Oct (Jeff Lewis) and a late migrant, seen and heard calling, at Carolina Beach State Park, 28 Oct (John Ennis).



Ash-throated Flycatcher, 11 Nov 2008, Lake Mattamuskeet, NC. Photo by Christian Newton.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher:** One, well-photographed but not relocated, at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 11 Nov (Christian Newton) provided the only fall sighting.

**Western Kingbird:** This species is an uncommon but regular fall transient along the coast of the Carolinas. This fall's sightings included one at Futch Game Land, Tyrrell Co, NC, 19 Oct (Derb Carter) and two, photographed, at the Osprey Nest Campground, Fairfield, NC, 7 Nov (Bob Crowley, *fide* Nick Anich).

**Bell's Vireo:** One was well-photographed, but not relocated, at Ft Fisher, NC, 1 Oct (Jim Parnell). If accepted, this sighting will provide the third documented state record. Interestingly, the first documented record came from nearby Carolina Beach SP in October 2006 from the same observer!

**Philadelphia Vireo:** One was early at The Historic Orchard at Altapass, near Spruce Pine, NC, 23 Aug (Valerie Crabill). One was seen at Battle Park, Rocky Mount, NC, 18 Sep (Ricky Davis). A high count of six was tallied at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, 30 Sep (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey). On the same date, individuals were found in Corolla, NC (Jeff Lewis) and Table Rock SP, SC (Steve Tracey). Several were seen on Daniels Island, Charleston, SC, 3 Oct (Shawn Hayes). One was seen in Weaverville, NC, 10 Oct (Gail Lankford). One was somewhat late at Carolina Beach SP, NC, 26 Oct (John Ennis).

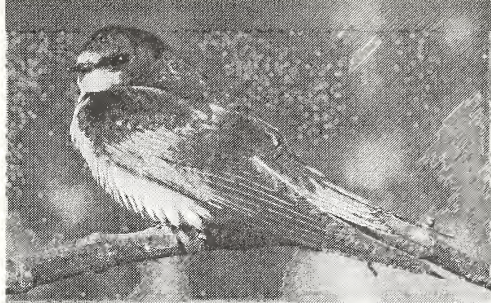
**Common Raven:** Reports outside the mountains included two (mated pair?) in Mocksville, NC, 13 Sep (Harry LeGrand, et al); a local high count of eight at the Pilot Mountain, NC, hawk watch, 17 Sep (Phil Dickinson); one soaring near the rock quarry in Hickory, NC, 19 Sep (Dwayne Martin); one seen from Sandling Beach during the "Big Sit" at Falls Lake, NC, 12 Oct (Brian Bockhahn); and one heard calling in Winston-Salem, NC, 20 Nov (Dickinson).

**Bank Swallow:** An impressive count of about 200 was made at Lake Marion, Clarendon Co, SC, 2 Aug (John Cely).

**Cave Swallow:** This species continued its recent tradition of late fall influx into the coastal Carolinas. The first report was of one over James Island, SC, 27 Oct (Dennis Forsythe). One was seen over the S end of Figure Eight Island, NC, 29 Oct, and three were seen the following day, 30 Oct (Derb Carter). A high count of twelve was tallied at the catfish ponds in Creswell, NC, 5 Nov (Ricky Davis). A total of five were seen during the Wings over Water Festival—two at the Cape Hatteras campground, Buxton, NC 6 Nov (Brian Bockhahn); one over the Salt Pond, Cape Point, NC, 8 Nov (Taylor Piephoff); and two at Pea Island NWR, NC, 8 Nov (Ricky Davis). Two were seen over Wrightsville Beach, NC, 9 Nov (Dean Edwards). Three were spotted over the beach at Pine Knoll Shores, NC, 11 Nov (John Fussell, JoAnne Powell). Six were discovered roosting in a wooden structure, where at least one succumbed to the cold temperature, at Fort Macon, Atlantic Beach, NC, 19 Nov (Fussell, Randy Newman). One was found at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 26 Nov (Steve Calver, et al).



**Barn Swallow:** Late migrants included one over the S end of Figure Eight Island, NC, 29 Oct (Derb Carter); ten+ at Folly Beach, SC, 31 Oct (Chris Snook); and four inside a flock of Tree Swallows at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 22 Nov (Jeff Lewis).



Barn Swallow, 22 Nov 2008, Lake Mattamuskeet. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** This species irrupted into the Carolinas last winter, but doesn't appear to have done so this year, as only a handful of sightings were reported by the end of the period. Early sightings included one at Myrtle Beach SP, SC, 29 Sep (Jack Peachey) and one at Hamilton Lakes Park, Greensboro, NC, 11 Oct (Henry Link).

**Sedge Wren:** Sightings away from the coast included one photographed at Tanglewood Park, Winston-Salem, NC, 9 Oct (John Haire); one near the French Broad River, Henderson Co, NC, 12 Oct (Wayne Forsythe, Marilyn Westphal); and one at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, 30 Oct (Ron Selvey).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** A pair, either very late migrants or overwintering birds, were found at Ebenezer Point, Jordan Lake, NC, 23 Nov (Josh & Sterling Southern).

**Bicknell's Thrush:** One was caught in a mist-net and banded at Weymouth Woods, Southern Pines, NC, 3 Oct (Susan Campbell). There are only three documented state records for this species.



Sprague's Pipit, 29 Oct 2008, Jasper Co., SC. Photo by Steve Calver.

**Wood Thrush:** Somewhat late were several at Weymouth Woods, Southern Pines, NC, 8 Oct (Susan Campbell) and one in a yard on James Island, SC, 14 Oct (Dennis Forsythe).

**Gray Catbird:** An amazing one-hour count of over 1500 migrating catbirds was made on Daniel Island, Charleston, SC, 3 Oct (Shawn Hayes).

**Sprague's Pipit:** A very rare stray from the Great Plains, one was well-photographed at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 29 Oct (Steve Calver, Ellie Covington).

**Cedar Waxwing:** Early sightings included five on Roanoke



Island, NC, 20 Aug (Jeff Lewis) and two at Boiling Springs Lakes, Brunswick Co, NC, 30 Aug (Jeff Phippen, Taylor Piephoff). Though these birds were likely early wanderers, the observers pondered the possibility of breeding in the area, though no evidence was found.

**Blue-winged Warbler:** Reports of migrants in the lower piedmont and coastal plain, where this species is less common, included one, somewhat early, in Columbia, SC, 10 Aug (Steve Tracey); one in Beaufort, NC, 17 Aug (Rich & Susan Boyd); a juvenile female, caught, banded, and released in York, SC, 17 Aug (Bill Hilton); an adult in Schenck Forest, Raleigh, NC, 22 Sep (Josh Southern); one along the Little River, Durham Co, NC, 30 Sep (Tom Krakauer); and one in Southern Shores, NC, 30 Sep (Jeff Lewis).

**Golden-winged Warbler:** Locally unusual sightings included a male at Mt Mitchell, NC, 18 Aug (Simon Thompson); one at Bethabara Park, Winston-Salem, NC, 6 Sep (Ferenc Domoki); and one at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, 17 Sep and 24 Sep (John Lindfors).

**“Brewster’s” Warbler:** Three sightings were made of this hybrid warbler—a male, early, in Currituck, NC, 7 Aug (Linda Ward); a first-generation adult female at a birdbath in Aynor, SC, 4 Sep (Stephen Thomas); and one at Bethabara Park, Winston-Salem, NC, 6 Sep (Ron Morris).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** Though this species is known to winter in the coastal plain and lower piedmont, it is not usually seen at the higher elevations during the colder months. One, presumably a late migrant, was found at Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC, 1 Nov (Simon Thompson).

**Nashville Warbler:** An uncommon migrant through the Carolinas, this species was well reported this fall. One was spotted during the Falls Lake, NC Fall Bird Count, 23 Sep (Deck Stapleton). A juvenile male was banded at Hilton Pond, York, SC, 27 Sep (Bill Hilton). One was found near the Aquarium at Ft Fisher, NC, 3 Oct (Rich Boyd). One was seen in Weaverville, NC, 10 Oct (Gail Lankford). Many were seen at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, with a high count of five on 8 Oct (Greg Massey, Harry Sell), and one remaining 2 Nov (John Lindfors). Several individuals were seen 19



Nashville Warbler, 19 Oct 2008, Roanoke Island, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

Oct—one in Emerald Isle, NC (Sally Carter, John Voigt); one in Manteo, NC (Jeff Lewis); and one on North Folly Island, SC (Chris Snook). One was somewhat late at North River Game Lands, Carteret Co, NC, 9 Nov (Brian Bockhahn).

**Yellow Warbler:** An impressive one-day count of 212 was made at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 8 Aug (Steve Calver). One was found on the causeway at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, where this species is known to winter, 22 Nov (Jeff Lewis).

**Cape May Warbler:** An adult male was very late, where it was photographed at a birdbath, in Browns Summit, NC, 22 Nov (Julien McCarthy).

**Kirtland's Warbler:** Found about once a decade or so in the Carolinas, one was carefully observed for 10–15 minutes at the Hospital Fields in Transylvania Co, NC, 1 Oct (Norma & Bill Siebenheller, et al). This sighting is the fourth documented state record.

**Prairie Warbler:** Late reports from sites where this species is known to winter included two on the causeway at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 22 Nov (Jeff Lewis) and two or more at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, by the end of the period (John Fussell).

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** Sightings outside the mountains included one at Durant Nature Park, Raleigh, NC, 29 Sep (Matthew Daw); one along the Little River, Durham Co, NC, 30 Sep (Tom Krakauer); and a fall-plumaged adult male at Lake Hagler, Fort Mill, SC, 11 Oct (Stephen Thomas).

**Cerulean Warbler:** Locally unusual sightings included one at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, 9 Aug (Simon Thompson); one at Waccamaw NWR, SC, 18 Aug (Jack Peachey); and a first-fall bird at Bethabara Park, Winston-Salem, NC, 23 Aug (Ferenc Domoki).

**Connecticut Warbler:** Two reports of this rare and hard-to-see species were made this fall. One was found during the Falls Lake, NC, Fall Bird Count, 23 Sep (Brian Bockhahn). The other, a first-year bird, was found at Hamilton Lakes Park, Greensboro, NC, 10 Oct (Henry Link). Neither bird was relocated.

**Mourning Warbler:** This rare species made a good showing at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, where five sightings were made between 9 Aug and 21 Sep (*fide* Wayne Forsythe). This site's first sighting was of a female, somewhat early, 9 Aug (Simon Thompson) and its one-day high count was two, made 17 Sep (Ron Selvey, Simon Harvey). The only sightings of this species away from Jackson Park were an immature in a yard in Watauga Co, NC, 17 Aug (Merrill Lynch) and an adult male at Bethabara Park, Winston-Salem, NC, 23 Aug (Ferenc Domoki).

**Wilson's Warbler:** Sightings of this uncommon migrant were one, early, at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, 31 Aug (Simon Thompson); a juvenile at Bethabara Park, Winston-Salem, NC, 23 Aug (Ferenc Domoki); one in Cayce, SC, 22 Sep (Jason Giovannone); one in Duke Gardens, Durham, NC, 24



Wilson's Warbler, 19 Oct 2008, Jacksonville, NC. Photo by Gunter Richter.



Sep (Bill Majoros); one photographed in Jacksonville, NC, 19 Oct (Gunter Richter); a first-fall female at Civitan Park, Winston-Salem, NC, 20 Oct (John Haire); a male at Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC, on the late date of 1 Nov (Thompson); and an adult male, possibly wintering, at Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Park, Scotland Neck, NC, 8–15 Nov (Christian Newton).

**Canada Warbler:** Though this species breeds in the higher parts of the mountains, it is uncommon at lower elevations. One was photographed in Fort Mill, SC, 28 Sep (Stephen Thomas). A first-fall bird was found at Bethabara Park, Winston-Salem, NC, 23 Aug (Ferenc Domoki).

**Western Tanager:** This rare stray from the West was reported twice this fall. A non-breeding plumaged adult male was found on a Carolina Bird Club Field Trip to Carolina Beach SP, NC, 3 Oct (Bruce Smithson, et al), but not relocated on subsequent field trips. Also, one visited a feeder in Conway, SC, 12 Nov (Gary Phillips).



Clay-colored Sparrow, 3 Oct 2008, Bald Head Island  
Photo by Ellen Sutliff.

**Clay-colored Sparrow:**

Sightings of this uncommon winter visitor included one, somewhat early, in the scrub next to the groin at Oregon Inlet, NC, 26 Sep (David Smith); one photographed during the CBC fall meeting field trip to Bald Head Island, NC, 3 Oct (Ellen Sutliff); two in the fields W of Lake Phelps, NC, 19 Oct (Derb Carter) and three there 9 Nov (Ricky Davis); one at a feeder in Myrtle Beach, SC, 25 Oct (KC Foggin); one at North River

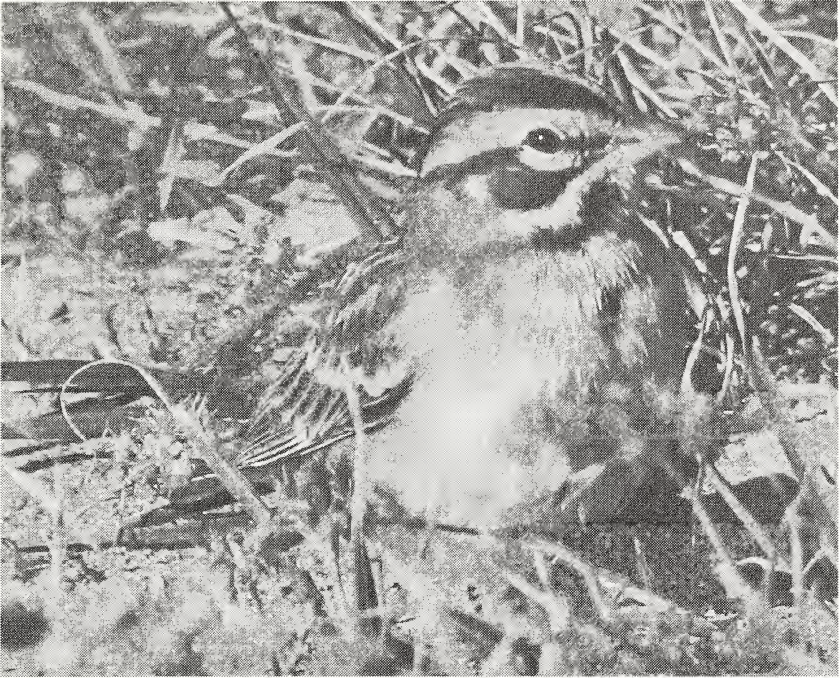
Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 26 Oct (John Fussell, et al); and one, a first for the area, in a field along Leggett Rd, E of Rocky Mount, NC, 29 Nov (Davis).

**Vesper Sparrow:** Reports away from the usual high-elevation breeding sites were two at the Recreation Park in Black Mountain, NC, 8 Oct (Stu Gibeau); five on Daniel Island, SC, 22 Oct (Shawn Hayes); one at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 26 Oct (John Fussell, et al); one near the old Coast Guard Station at Oregon Inlet, NC, 8 Nov (Jeff Lewis); and a high count of at least six at Sutton Lake, NC, 24 Nov (John Ennis).

**Lark Sparrow:** There were multiple reports of this uncommon western stray in the Carolinas this fall. Early individuals were found at Savannah NWR, SC, 14 Aug (Buddy Campbell, Dean Bradley); North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 17 Aug (John Fussell, et al); and N of Southport, NC, 30 Aug (Harry LeGrand). A first-winter bird was seen at the Glenburnie Quarry, New Bern, NC, 20 Sep (Bob Holmes, Al Gamache, et al). One was found during a local Audubon field trip to Brick Pond Park, North Augusta, SC, 27 Sep (Lois Stacey, et al). Three were seen on Daniel Island,



Charleston, SC, 3 Oct, and five there 22 Oct (Shawn Hayes). Two were seen at Civitan Park, Winston-Salem, NC, 18 Oct (Rob Rogers). One was photographed on the lawn next to the Visitor's Center at Pea Island NWR, NC, 22 Oct (Jeff Lewis) and seen again 26 Oct (Ricky Davis).

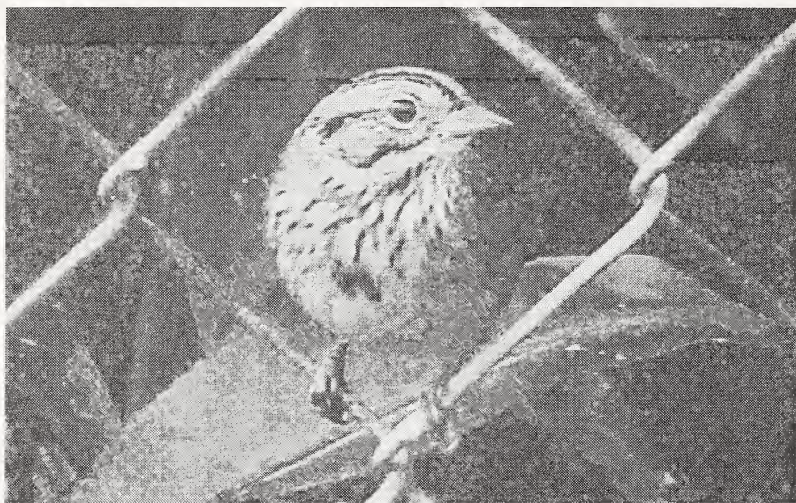


Lark Sparrow, 22 Oct 2008, Pea Island NWR. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

**Henslow's Sparrow:** Rarely seen away from the VOA sites, a juvenile was found at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 11 Nov (Christian Newton).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** There were a higher-than-usual number of reports of this secretive visitor this fall. One was out-of-season, along the Nature Trail at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, 31 Aug (Simon Thompson) and another (same bird?) was there 16–17 Sep (Wayne Forsythe). Two were found in northern Watauga Co, NC, 20 Sep (Ricky Davis, Merrill Lynch). Another was in a yard in Watauga Co, NC, 24 Sep (Lynch). Rare on the coast, one was seen during the "Big Sit" at Pea Island NWR, NC, 12 Oct (Jeff Lewis). One visited a backyard in Greensboro, NC, 14–16 Oct, (Scott DePue, *vide* Henry Link). One was found at McAlpine Park, near Charlotte, NC, 19 Oct (Davis). Several were seen at Daniel Island, SC, 22 Oct (Shawn Hayes). One was found at Savannah NWR, SC, 1 Nov (Brenda Brannen, Sandy Beasley). One was seen near Lake Phelps, NC, 11 Nov (Christian Newton). A good count of three was made at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, NC, 23 Nov (Davis).

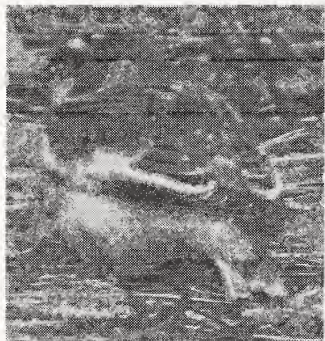




Lincoln's Sparrow, 15 Oct 2008, Greensboro, NC. Photo by John Haire.

**White-throated Sparrow:** One was very early, at The Historic Orchard at Altapass, near Spruce Pine, NC, 30 Aug (Simon Thompson).

**White-crowned Sparrow:** Reports of this uncommon winter visitor included one seen during the "Big Sit" at Pea Island NWR, NC, 12 Oct (Jeff Lewis); two in Henderson Co, NC, 12 Oct (Marilyn Westphal); one, a first park record, at Lake Conestee Nature Park, SC, 15 Oct (Paul Serridge); one on North Folly Island, SC, 19 Oct (Chris Snook); two on Daniel Island, SC, 22 Oct (Shawn Hayes); several at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 26 Oct (John Fussell, et al); an impressive count of ten at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 29 Oct (Steve Calver); a juvenile at Merchant's Shell Pond, New Bern, NC, 1 Nov (Al Gamache); two juveniles at Patriot's Point, SC, 7 Nov (Dennis Forsythe); and one juvenile at Horseshoe Farm Park, Raleigh, NC, 18 Nov (Clyde Smith).



Snow Bunting, 7 Nov 2008, Alligator River NWR. Photo by Derby Carter

**Snow Bunting:** One was seen, surprisingly perched in a tree, along Long Curve Rd, Alligator River NWR, NC, during the Wings over Water Festival, 6–8 Nov (Derb Carter, Taylor Piephoff, et al). Two more were found during the festival, on Pelican Island, W of Oregon Inlet, NC, 8 Nov (Brian Bockhahn). In South Carolina, one was found on the causeway at Huntington Beach SP, 12 Nov (Joan Carr).

**Blue Grosbeak:** Late individuals were found in Manteo, NC, 25 Oct (Jeff Lewis) and at the old Coast Guard Station on Folly Island, SC, 1 Nov (Chris Snook).

**Painted Bunting:** Lingering into winter and visiting feeders were a pair in Beaufort, NC, 20 Nov through the end of the period (Rich & Susan Boyd); five in Straits, NC, 22 Nov (John Fussell); a female, returning for a third winter, in Beaufort, SC, 27 Nov (Buddy Campbell); and two in Wilmington, NC, 29–30 Nov (Bruce Jones).

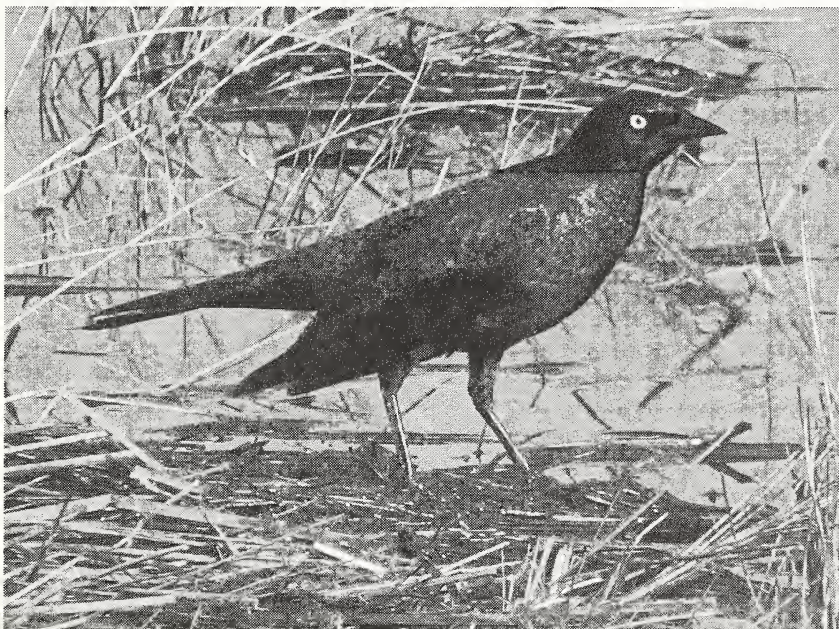
**Dickcissel:** Uncommon for the mountains, one was seen in Henderson Co, NC, 12–13 Oct (Marilyn Westphal, Ron Selvey). One was found on Bald Head Island, NC, 18 Oct (Mike Turner). Somewhat late was one in Manteo, NC, 6 Nov (Jeff Lewis) and another at Alligator River NWR, 9 Nov (Lewis).

**Bobolink:** Noteworthy sightings included a huge flock of about 900 at Alligator River NWR, NC, 30 Aug (Jeff Lewis); ten+ at Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 10 Sep (Wayne Forsythe); a flock of about 20 at Cape Point, NC, 25 Sep (David Smith); and another flock of about 20 in Henderson Co, NC, 12–14 Oct (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey, Marilyn Westphal).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Only one was reported this period, a female, at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 25 Sep (David Smith).

**Rusty Blackbird:** A high count of 100–150 of this declining species was made at Lake Conestee Nature Park, SC, 28 Nov (Cindy & Louis Womble, *vide* Paul Serridge).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** One found at the Visitor's Center at Pea Island NWR, NC, during the Wings over Water Festival, 7 Nov (John Fussell, et al) was photographed in nearby New Field, 8 Nov (Steve Shultz).



Brewer's Blackbird, 7 Nov 2008, Pea Island NWR. Photo by Steve Shultz.



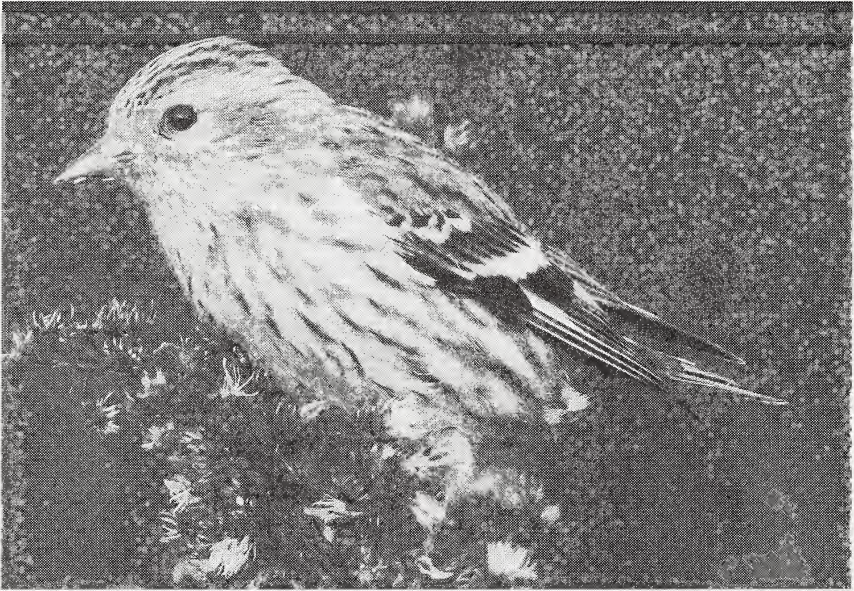
**Boat-tailed Grackle:** Though common along the coast, this species is rare inland. A female was found at the inland site of the Vernon James Research Center, Roper, NC, 7 Aug (Don Rote).

**Orchard Oriole:** An extraordinarily late juvenile was photographed on the causeway at Lake Mattamuskeet, 22 Nov (Jeff Lewis).

**Purple Finch:** Reports of this irruptive winter species began at the start of November, with three in a yard in Bear Creek, Chatham Co, NC, 1 Nov (Parker Backstrom).

**Red Crossbill:** A flock of ten birds was seen at the NC Welcome Center along I-40, Haywood Co, NC, 23 Aug (Mike Todd).

**Pine Siskin:** It appears to be an irruption year for this species, as multiple reports were made by the end of the period. The first report away from the mountains was of one, seen during the "Big Sit" at Pea Island NWR, NC, 12 Oct (Jeff Lewis). Also, a high count of approximately 150 was made at Pee Dee NWR, NC, 23 Nov (Ron Clark).



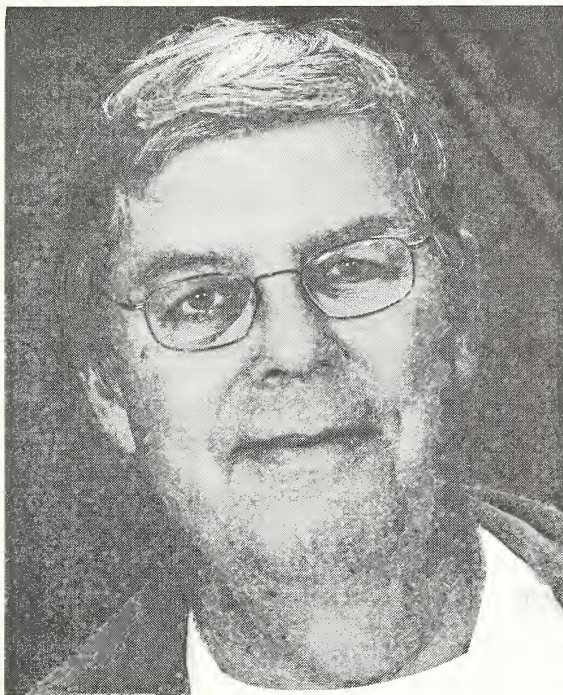
Pine Siskin, 17 Dec 2008, Oregon Inlet, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis

## In Memoriam: Robin M. Carter, 1945–2008

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**Dennis M. Forsythe**

*Department of Biology, The Citadel, 171 Moultrie St.,  
Charleston, SC 29409*



Robin Carter, spring 2008

On November 1, 2008, Robin Carter died peacefully in his home in Columbia, SC after a battle with kidney cancer. His death leaves a major emptiness in the birding community of the Carolinas because of his vast knowledge of birds and bird-finding, and his enthusiasm for sharing this knowledge with others. I think nothing demonstrates Robin's personality more than a short review he did of Bill Evans's sound cassette of nocturnal thrush calls (*Chat* 54(2):31–32). In this review, Robin shows his enthusiasm for new information about birds, especially bird vocalizations. This interest in bird vocalizations led to his later passion for sound recording. The review also shows his interest in sharing this information with others, an interest that he also showed by leading field trips. And the review shows his sense of humor and congeniality, traits which made him such an ideal field companion.



Robin was born November 15, 1945 in Miami Beach, FL. He spent his childhood in Virginia and later in Ohio, where he graduated from Euclid High School in 1963. He graduated from Harvard College in 1967 and received a master's degree in anthropology in 1969 from Duke University and a doctorate in anthropology in 1974, also from Duke University. He served in the United States Army during the Vietnam era.

Carter's wife, Caroline Eastman, is credited with encouraging Robin to start birding by suggesting they go on an Audubon field trip in Massachusetts. She said "he found the woodcocks enchanting". This field trip started his lifelong passion for birds.

Robin first became acquainted with the Carolina Bird Club while he was at Duke University. He became more active when he and Caroline moved to Columbia, SC in 1985, attending meetings, leading field trips, being chair of the SC Bird Records Committee, vice-president and finally president of the Carolina Bird Club (1989–1991).

Robin loved birding big days and held the record for several states, including Florida and South Carolina; he also won the out-of-state trophy in the first Great Texas Birding Classic. Robin had the intellectual ability to visualize and plan these routes in detail, a trait I attributed to his facility with languages and that he spent most of his working career as a computer systems analyst and programmer. I think that Robin was happiest when he was scouting for a big day. And he was especially pleased when his scouting paid off, such as the occasion when at 2 AM on a calm morning in late April on a hilltop in Chester Co. we actually heard the staked-out Barn Owl call and the Spring Peeper-like flight calls of Swainson's Thrushes flying overhead as a bonus. Robin also loved Christmas Bird Counts, and he initiated or compiled several including the Columbia, Congaree National Park, and, most recently, the Pinewood counts. Robin loved county birding and was, I believe, the first person to see 100 species in each of South Carolina's 46 counties. At the time of his death he was also working on seeing 150 species in each county (see <http://www.countybirds-sc.com/>). Actually, Robin just loved being out looking at birds, and I think one of his favorite expressions was something like "if you want to see birds you have to get out and look for them".

All of the above experiences gave Robin a unique perspective on birds in South Carolina, which he used to write the annual Spring and Fall Migration Day Count Summaries for *The Chat* (1993–1999). From 2001 through 2008 he wrote the South Carolina Region Christmas Bird Count summaries for *American Birds*. Robin's birding experiences in South Carolina led to his publishing *Finding Birds in South Carolina*, an exquisite birding guide to birding areas in all 46 counties. Although it is long out-of-print, Caroline Eastman hopes to reprint it with minor changes as a book-on-demand. Robin was working on a new bird-finding guide to be published as a book-on-demand. He envisioned the book to take two years and the final product to have about 250 sites and to run to about 500 pages. Robin did some of these site descriptions in 2005–2007 and they are published on the Carolina Bird



Club website (see <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/sites/SC/>). His untimely death robbed us of what would have been an exceptional bird-finding guide.

Robin was a passionate sound recordist who could often be found in the early morning recording bird songs in a quiet natural area. His bird recordings from the Congaree National Park and the Aiken Gopher Tortoise Heritage Preserve are beautiful and of professional quality. Robin had a special relationship with the Congaree National Park, leading walks there and doing research. One of the products of this relationship was an annotated checklist of the birds of Congaree National Park, which Robin published in *The Chat* 69(1):1–28, 2005.

Besides the Carolina Bird Club, Robin was a member and officer in the Columbia Audubon Society and the Friends of the Congaree National Park. He was a founder of the Santee Birding and Nature Festival. He led field trips to all parts of South Carolina including the Warblers before Work sponsored by the Columbia Audubon Society and the Dawn Chorus walks at the Congaree National Park. And he was always willing to cheerfully share his knowledge with others, visiting birders and locals alike.

Robin Carter's life exemplified the Wisdom of Buddha: "Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle..." which was read at his memorial service December 28, 2008 at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Columbia, SC. Robin Carter is survived by his wife of 40 years, Caroline Merriam Eastman of Columbia, SC; his sisters, Patty Senter of Beaufort, NC and Janice Evans of Donnelsville, OH; and his brother John of Oneonta, NY.

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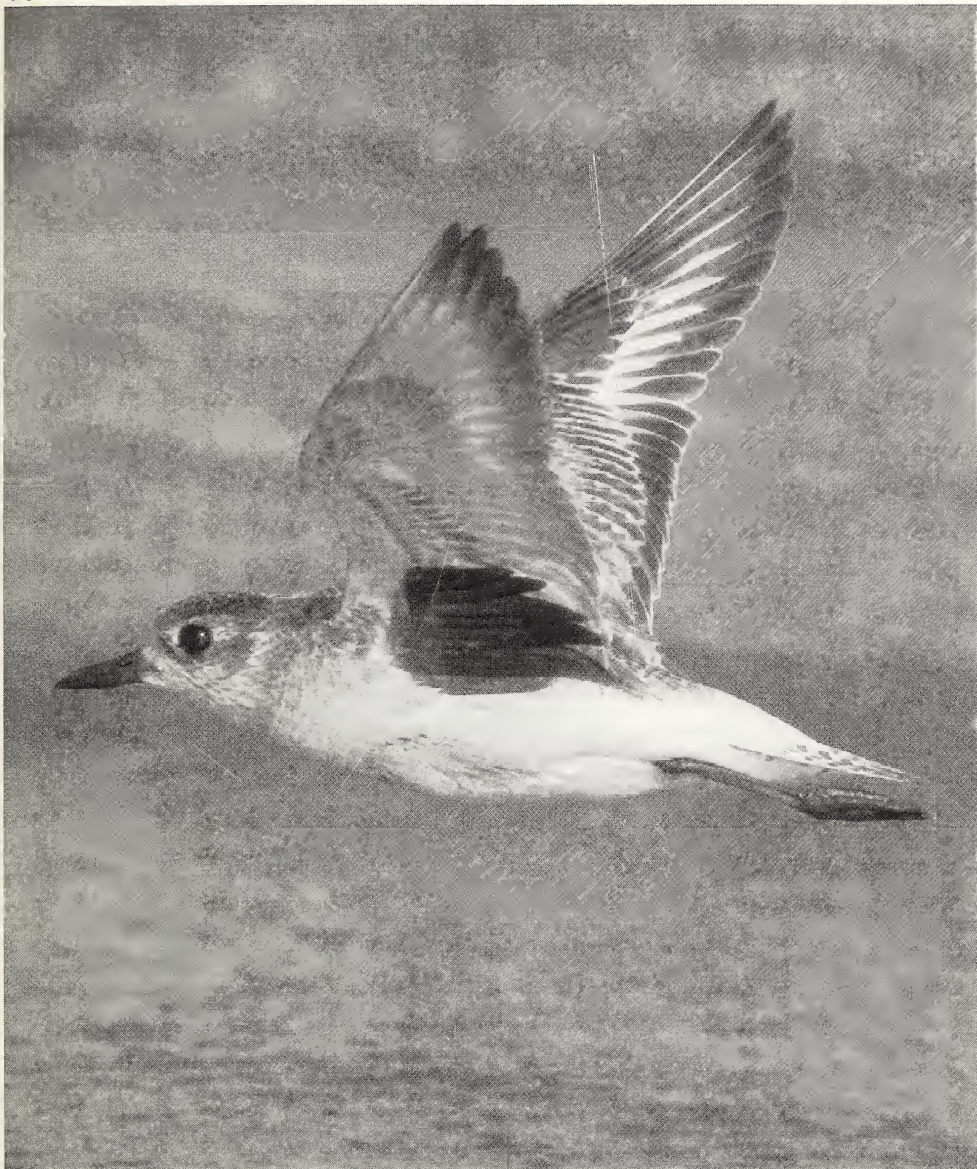
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# Mass Die-offs of Greater Shearwaters in the Western North Atlantic: Effects of Weather Patterns on Mortality of a Trans-equatorial Migrant

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## Introduction

In June of 2007 thousands of dead and dying Greater Shearwaters, *Puffinus gravis*, were reported at sea in waters off the northern Bahamas; subsequently, significant numbers were found washed ashore along the Atlantic coast of the southeastern US that same season. Media reports suggested that scientists were alarmed and feared that these massive die-offs resulted from some unknown ecological disaster. These concerns were widely circulated over the Internet, and various research institutions encouraged people to salvage specimens so that they could be examined for contaminants and other factors that might explain the die-off. Many causes have been suggested, including mercury poisoning, bacterial infections, and H5N1 avian flu. Necropsies of the dead shearwaters revealed little more than that the birds were very emaciated.

Actually, spring migration die-offs of this species occur regularly and probably nearly annually. The magnitude of the die-offs, the degree of documentation, and the amount of media coverage are of course highly variable. Weather conditions, notably offshore winds, in this part of the western North Atlantic are not conducive to washing dead birds shoreward. The Labrador Current and long shore currents carry floating objects southward, while the Gulf Stream transports Outer Continental Shelf waters north and east. As a result, only a small portion of passive floating marine objects such as dead seabirds are actually beached; thus seabird mortality could go largely undetected.

I have been tracking these die-off events for about three decades. What follows is not so much a scientific study of the issue as it is a collection of facts that directly and indirectly may help explain this phenomenon. To give perspective, I also have added to this account various aspects of the marine biology of this Greater Shearwaters.

## Life History and Migration

Greater Shearwaters are trans-equatorial migrants breeding in the Southern Hemisphere and, in our summer, “wintering” in the western North Atlantic. *Breeding*: This species’ entire breeding range is restricted to two

small islands of the Tristan de Cunha group, Gough Island and Kidney Island off the Falklands, but despite its limited breeding distribution the species is relatively abundant. The breeding population is estimated at be 5 million-plus breeding pairs (Williams 1984), and it is generally believed that the total adult population exceeds 6 million pairs. *Wintering*: In the western North Atlantic these shearwaters occur over cool pelagic waters both as summer visitors (during the Southern Hemisphere's winter) and as migrants. Most "winter" north of 45° N latitude (Stresemann and Stresemann 1970). Small numbers also occur in the Gulf of Mexico from May through October. *Migration*: Nearly the entire global population passes through waters off the southeastern US in the spring and early summer (Lee 1999), with a modest number of sub-adults remaining off of the southeastern coast during the summer through November (age based on North Carolina State Museum specimens and lack of observed flight feather molt in "wintering" shearwaters off North Carolina, pers. obs.). Off North Carolina they typically occur in waters from 180 to 300 meters in depth (Lee 1986, 1995). The bulk of southward fall migration appears to be more over the mid- to eastern Atlantic (Warham 1996).

### Occurrence off the Southeastern United States and the Gulf of Mexico

While Greater Shearwaters are of common occurrence as migrants in the southeastern US, with, for example, sometimes thousands being seen on a single day in the Gulf Stream off North Carolina's Outer Banks (Lee 1995), as recently as 1963 there were only 22 records for the entire southeastern US (Kale 1963). The limited number of earlier reports reflects the sparse amount of information available prior to regular excursions' being made into offshore waters by dedicated bird watchers. The species occurs primarily along the edge of the outer Continental Shelf and along the inner edge of the Gulf Stream. Comparative studies by Haney and Lee (in ms) show that Greater Shearwaters make up 3.9% of the total annual marine bird fauna and 3.5% of the total annual marine bird biomass in the Gulf Stream off North Carolina's Outer Banks. To the south, in the Gulf Stream across the Georgia Embayment, these shearwaters are less abundant and represent a smaller percentage of the total annual avifauna (1.9%) and biomass (2.3%). They do not regularly occur in inshore waters and only during strong offshore winds within the period of peak migration are these shearwaters likely to be seen from shore.

Greater Shearwaters have been recorded from mid-April through late December off the southeastern US, but the principal period of occurrence is from mid-May through mid-November. The majority of the birds pass through offshore waters from mid-June through the first half of August (Clapp et al. 1982, Lee 1986, 1995). Modest to large numbers of Greater Shearwaters also "winter" off the southeastern US, but the return fall migration through this area is minimal, thereby supporting the belief that most southbound birds migrate further out to sea.

Greater Shearwaters have been reported from the Gulf of Mexico during the warmer months on occasion but they are uncommon (Clapp et al. 1982).

### Biology at Sea

Greater Shearwaters are found over open seas where they feed from the surface, by plunge diving, and by following fishing vessels to scavenge offal. Principal food items are fish and squid, and to some extent crustaceans. These shearwaters tend to concentrate along current edges, around floating mats of pelagic *Sargassum*, and over schools of foraging fishes. They often feed in mixed species flocks. Examination of the digestive tracks of 43 specimens collected off North Carolina (Lee unpublished) revealed mostly fish (50% occurrence, including Clupeids, Myctophids, and one jack, *Caranx hippos*), and squid or remains of squid beaks (100% occurrence: three families including *Histioteutius corona* and *Thysanoteuthis rhomus*). Many of the squid beaks that were in the birds' crops, based on wear, probably represent long-term accumulations.

Miscellaneous food items include one beetle, shrimp appendages, and one arthropod claw. Plastic ingestion by 35 Greater Shearwaters collected off the southeastern US was studied and compared to that of other pelagic marine birds occurring in the same region by Moser and Lee (1992). Despite the high incidence of plastic ingestion in Greater Shearwaters collected off North Carolina (100%) and reports of plastic obstruction starvation in Greater Shearwaters, they concluded that plastic ingestion, including secondary ingestion from the guts of prey items, is not a significant cause of mortality.

### Die-offs and Mortality Factors

Mass die-offs of Greater Shearwaters are reported from waters of the southeastern US on a regular basis. While reporting is limited from outside of US waters, these events are known to occur as far south as the southern Caribbean (Surinam and Trinidad; Collins and Tikasingh 1974, Mees 1976). There are no reports of die-offs from the Gulf of Mexico where the species occurs less commonly. These events are restricted to late spring and early summer and often represent hundreds to thousands of dead and dying birds. Die-off events can easily go unnoticed because, as noted above, the currents along the southeastern US are not conducive to washing ashore birds dying in offshore waters, and the magnitude of mortality is probably often underestimated because the individual birds are widely scattered over various barrier islands and throughout different states. On several occasions I have had North Carolina charter boat captains comment on large numbers of dead and dying shearwaters they have seen in the Gulf Stream. Despite the regularity of this seasonal mortality, it has not been widely reported in the scientific literature, and the events are more likely to be reported by local media. While the scientific community is aware of the issue, and dead birds have been examined in attempts to determine the cause of these mass



mortalities, nothing conclusive has been found, and as a result nothing has been published regarding these die-offs.

**Timing of die-off events in relation to migration:** Greater Shearwater die-offs occur mostly in June, but dates of documented occurrence extend from 28 May through 4 August. There is an 1893 report of many found dead on a South Carolina beach from sometime in late August, but this was storm-related. The peak time for die-off reports is between the third week of June and the first week of July. Beached salvaged birds are likely to have been dead and drifting at sea for days, and perhaps longer.

At these times, Greater Shearwaters are recently departed from their breeding grounds. Adults depart northward from their breeding grounds in April and May, and their fledglings leave the nest and begin to migrate north between May and August (Rowan 1952). The peak occurrence of Greater Shearwaters in the Grand Banks area does not occur until the second week of August (Murphy 1936).

In comparison, the Cory's Shearwater, *P. diomedea*, is a similar-sized seabird that occurs off the southeastern coast of the US more commonly and is more regularly encountered than the Greater Shearwater. It is present at the same season, and feeds on similar prey items. Some individuals tend to occur closer to shore than Greater Shearwaters, and they are considerably more abundant both as migrants and seasonal residents (Lee 1995, Haney and Lee in ms, pers. obs.). This species, however, is a bird of the North Atlantic and its migration patterns are trans-Atlantic. Because of their abundance and other factors Cory's Shearwaters should be encountered much more commonly in die-offs if the issues affecting the mortality were of local origin. However, they are seldom encountered as beach-cast birds and there have been no documented region-wide, or even local, die-offs of this species. I point this out, as it provides indirect evidence that the causes of regular die-offs of Greater Shearwaters need not be factors originating in the temperate or sub-tropical waters of the North Atlantic. Along similar lines, during die-off events other locally occurring seabirds are not affected, and non-storm-related mass die-offs in all reported cases have been specific to Greater Shearwaters.

**Age of birds salvaged from die-offs:** While major components of the biology of Greater Shearwaters are unknown due to the remoteness of their breeding colonies, a general understanding of key aspects can be inferred from better-studied species. Lee and Haney (1996) summarized the life history of Manx Shearwaters, *Puffinus puffinus*, the most studied of the shearwaters. Average age of maturity and first breeding is between 6 and 7 years for this species. Mortality is highest in their fledgling year, and survivorship from hatching to first breeding age is 25–35%. Thus the number of immature birds at any given time is likely to be far greater than the total adult population. Using Manx Shearwater demography as a crude tool for a conservative population estimate, the total Greater Shearwater population could be greater than 20–24 million birds, with over 10–12 million individuals being sub-adults, juveniles, and immatures.

It appears that all of the Greater Shearwaters salvaged from die-off events are non-breeding birds (fledgling year, immature, and sub-adult individuals). Collection of live healthy specimens in the Gulf Stream off North Carolina indicates that the majority of the individuals migrating through and “wintering” in waters off the southeastern US are likewise not adult birds. This finding is based on plumage, molt sequence, gonad size, and the presence of bursas. (The presence of bursas in petrels confirms birds of hatching to one-year-old birds, but some, while still immature, may be older.) While the plumage of adult and younger birds is similar in overall appearance, adults are distinguishable in having dark caps and white necks that appear to be more contrasting because the white neck collar is wider and more defined. While “wintering” in the North Atlantic, adult Greater Shearwaters undergo a rapid molt of flight feathers between July and August. Adults collected ( $n=2$ ) and observed at sea off North Carolina were in early to mid-molt sequences of primary feathers between mid-June and early July. While many non-adult individuals exhibited some molt of body feathers, none of our series (April through December) of pre-breeding-age birds were in the process of molting flight feathers. Specimens collected at sea were nearly all non-breeding age individuals. The presence of a bursa indicates birds are not of breeding age. All die-off event specimens examined for the presence of bursas had them ( $n=20$ ), and nearly all of the specimens collected at sea off North Carolina also had bursas ( $n=50$  out of 52). While many of the die-off individuals, based on feather wear and body feather molt sequences, were not first-year birds, none were mature adults. At this time it is not clear what proportions of the different immature age groups are represented in the mortality events.

**Weights:** Body mass of 18 healthy Greater Shearwaters collected in the Gulf Stream off North Carolina ranged from 503.7 to 870.0 grams and averaged  $666.0 \pm 89.2$  grams (Lee and Grant 1986). Weights of 14 adults collected on their breeding grounds ranged from 715 to 950 grams, while 50 adults collected on “wintering” grounds off Nova Scotia averaged  $833 \pm 77.6$  grams (Hagen 1952, Brown et al 1981). Dead and dying Greater Shearwaters salvaged from North Carolina beaches ( $n=20$ ) ranged from 337.9 to 432.5 grams (mean=379.5 g). These weights are well below those of breeding and “wintering” adults and are only 50.7 to 77% (mean=56.9%) of that of healthy individuals collected off North Carolina.

**Mercury loads:** Whaling, et al. (1980) examined total natural-source mercury loads in 51 species of marine birds collected off the North Carolina coast between 1979 and 1982. They found that Greater Shearwaters had some of the highest mercury loads of any of the species studied (surpassed only by Black-capped Petrels, *Pterodroma hasitata*, Royal Terns, *Thalasseus maximus*, and Herring Gulls *Larus argentatus*). Twenty-nine healthy Greater Shearwaters collected at sea had the following average mercury loads in tissues and various feathers: muscle 0.50 ppm, liver 2.28 ppm, kidney 0.89 ppm, feathers 0.95 ppm. The birds were regulating and excreting mercury through liver and kidney tissues, and by entrapping it in molting feathers. If

natural mercury is used as a proxy for the potential of accumulation of other types of contaminants, then Greater Shearwaters are expected to be also vulnerable to exposure through absorption and accumulation. Necropsies of shearwaters salvaged from die-off events have not indicated high contaminant levels to be a cause of mortality. The degree to which mercury is retained in fat tissue is unknown, but it is logical that its release into other tissues during the starvation process would place additional stress on the shearwaters.

### **Evidence for the Influence of the Doldrums on Mass Die-offs**

The weights of the beached dead and dying Greater Shearwaters are consistent with birds that have died of starvation. The molt sequence and plumage of these birds suggest many are young-of-the-year individuals, and bursa-based age determination suggest all birds to be of hatching and second-season age classes. The timing of the die-offs indicates that birds have recently arrived from the Southern Hemisphere. All of these factors lead to the conclusion that the birds associated with the die-off events are migrants and that the mortality is linked to stress related to the northward migration. Watson (1970) first proposed that the cause of these events is the result of the difficulty of migrants crossing the Doldrums in certain years. For reasons unknown, Watson's paper has continued to be overlooked by people concerned with the die-off events. Here I am simply supporting his earlier conclusions with additional information that has accumulated since the late 1960s.

The Doldrums, the same equatorial windless seas that stranded large sailing ships for weeks on end, are a barrier to the wind-dependent migration of Greater Shearwaters. A belt of low barometric pressure that often remains unaffected by both the northeast trade winds and the southeast trade winds of the Southern Hemisphere creates a virtual no-fly zone for some seabirds. The influence of the trade winds in equatorial regions can be seen in, or measured by, decreased salinity, seawater density, surface evaporation, and barometric pressure; and increased precipitation, and air and water temperature. Combinations of these factors can increase or decrease the extent of the area affected. In the western Atlantic the northern trade winds seldom extend south of northern South America. The trade winds of the Southern Hemisphere shift from south to north as the Northern Hemisphere spring changes into summer. At their peak the northern extent of these winds occasionally influences the Northern Hemisphere seas as far north as coastal Venezuela. However, they typically blow briskly only as far north as the equator (and mouth of the Amazon) from June to January, and during the remainder of the year this region is under a prevailing calm. The axis of the calm zone that separates the trade winds of the two hemispheres is actually a few degrees above the equator. In that the shift of the southern winds to the north does not begin until the northern migration of Greater Shearwaters is already underway, any variation in timing or magnitude could result in many



of the birds being forced to cross the Doldrums while the calm zone is still wide.

The problem of the seasonally enhanced low-latitude no-fly zone is made worse by a general lack of food resources for surface-foraging seabirds in this region. The warm surface waters of the tropics hold little oxygen. Accordingly, measurements of plankton in the upper 50 meters of the western Atlantic are at their lowest between latitude 10° N and 20° S. Combined with the loss of wind-driven wave action, this scarcity results in limited marine productivity and opportunity for these shearwaters to effectively feed when they are in this area. The westward-flowing Atlantic Equatorial and Brazilian Currents sharply turn, respectively, to the north and south in this same general area, thereby eliminating current edges and other opportunities for the formation of oceanic fronts along which the birds could feed. These windless conditions deplete energy reserves as the combination of limited food resources, extra energy demands needed for flight, and increased time needed to travel through the area take their toll on the shearwaters. The result is shearwaters in stressed and starved conditions when they reach the patchy resources of the temperate North Atlantic. While it is not unusual to have high mortality in hatching-year seabirds, the seasonal mass die-offs reported here suggest that for this species low recruitment rates are the result of timing of migration as it relates to equatorial weather patterns.

## Discussion

At first the evidence suggests that the spring migration die-off is a natural phenomenon, and indeed it is. The real question, however, is "Have these events increased in magnitude or frequency as a result of human activity?" It is interesting to note that despite the current regularity of mass die-offs of this shearwater, by the early 1960s Kale (1963) was only able to document 22 records, most of which were of individual birds, for the entire southeastern US. While the majority of these records were of beached birds, the dates of occurrence do not seem to be a result of spring die-offs as would be expected from our current assemblage of reports and salvaged specimens. Many of the individuals Kale reported were hurricane driven and a number of others are of late fall records. Of Kale's 22 records for the entire southeastern US obtained between 1879 and 1962, only seven are of beached birds that could have resulted from the die-off events. This species was considered to be very rare in the southeast up through the 1950s and 60s (e.g., Burleigh 1958), so it would seem that many more spring migrant die-off specimens would have found their way into museums and other sources of record if the spring die-offs were as regular an event 50 years ago as they are today. The first records of late spring/early summer dead beached shearwaters are mostly from 1911 and the late 1930s (GA, Burleigh 1958; NC, Person et al. 1959) and these all are of individual birds. Records of single individual beached specimens were still the norm even through the 1950s and 60s (Kale 1962, Tomkins 1959 and various reports in Audubon

Field Notes). Clapp et al. (1982) summarize all records of Greater Shearwaters from the southeastern US between 1893 through 1979. Of 113 records only 20 (18 %) are of beached birds and only four of these suggest mass die-off events. One of these occurred in South Carolina (1893, Wayne 1910) and three in Florida (1969, 1975, 1978; Ogden 1969, Ogden 1975, Ogden 1978). The first suggestion that reports of mass die-offs formed a pattern was by Watson (1970), who reported massive strandings of Greater Shearwaters along the Carolina coast in 1969. Various news accounts showed the die-off extended from Georgetown, SC to the Delmarva Peninsula and totaled 1000 to 2000 shearwaters. Subsequently the reports have been increasing in number, in the geographic area over which the die-offs have been documented, and perhaps also in the numbers reported per mortality event. A tally of all reported stranding events for the southeastern US and the Bahamas shows a marked recent increase in these events. While to some degree this increase should be interpreted as a result of an increased amount of coverage in recent decades, the value of beached birds was well known to people interested in ornithological investigations prior to the 1900s, and mass strandings were not likely to have been overlooked. The number of reported mortality events tallied per decade is as follows: 1890s, 1; 1900–1950s, 0; 1960s, 1; 1970s, 2; 1980s, 2; 1990s 6; 2000–2007, 5. The 1893 report is from late August and was stated to have occurred after a storm (Wayne 1910). Thus, the first documented occurrence of a non-storm-related die-off event is from 1969. Could the tropical, Doldrums-induced, starvation leading to the shearwaters' mass stranding be a result of climate change related to our current global warming?

While the Greater Shearwater is an abundant species with an estimated population of over 5 million breeding pairs (Williams 1984) making these die-off events insignificant, there may be increasing conservation concerns for this Atlantic endemic shearwater. The NOAA Fisheries National Seabird Program identified Greater Shearwaters to be the species most commonly encountered as by-catch in the US Atlantic pelagic long line fishery (Hata 2006). All of the by-catch was north of latitude 35° N. Charter boat captains working off North Carolina in the early summer commonly catch Greater Shearwaters while trolling for sport fish. This is the one time of year that by-catch is reported and these shearwaters are the only species that are regularly hooked. The birds aggressively go after the baits and most of the ones hooked and captured are in near-starved condition. Another conservation concern is that at one of their breeding sites, Gough Island, introduced house mice, *Mus musculus*, have recently been documented as important predators of nesting seabirds (Wanless et al. 2007). Another major concern is the potential impact of oil spills on this species. Greater Shearwaters are highly gregarious, often feed while swimming and diving and are attracted to oil slicks, hence are likely to be extremely vulnerable to oil spills. Spills during their peak migration in June and July off the Bahamas and southeastern US could jeopardize a large portion of the total population (Lee 1999). Concerns regarding frequency of by-catch are enhanced if the spring mortality of

young-of-the-year and immature birds is indeed an event accelerated by an increase in global warming.

Other logical explanations for the increased die-offs, such as that they are a result of an expanding population or a decrease in their prey base, are unlikely. While there have been no comparative surveys of Greater Shearwater populations at any of their nesting sites prior or subsequent to those of Williams (1984), there is nothing to suggest an increase in the population. The presence of introduced predatory rodents on one of the nesting islands, mortality from fisheries by-catch, and possible competition for food resources with expanding commercial pelagic fisheries operations would negate the likelihood of a significant population increase during the last three decades. There is no regional evidence of Greater Shearwaters or other seabirds shifting foraging behaviors or changing marine foraging zones, nor of changes in relative abundance as would be expected if the local prey base moved or became inadequate (1975–present, pers. obs. North Carolina’s Outer Continental Shelf). However, some dying shearwaters apparently move into continental shelf waters prior to expiring, as otherwise currents and wave actions would not be able to wash them ashore.

## Conclusions

Based on patterns of beach stranding of other species of pelagic birds off the southeastern US, the May–July timing of dead and dying shearwaters is unique. It is not related to storms or known problems resulting from human activities such as oil spills, or contamination from heavy metals or other pollutants. As in other seabirds, isolated strandings of individual Greater Shearwaters occur on a regular basis, but non-storm-related mass stranding and die-offs seem limited to this single species and confined to this one season. While the influence of the Doldrums on the North Atlantic die-offs may have been an occasional natural event in the past, the factors driving the event may now be increasing as a result of global warming. While die-off records have never consistently been recorded, available evidence suggests that these events are increasing and for the last few decades have become of regular occurrence. Gradual increased heating of the earth’s atmosphere and oceans would be expected to directly drive the duration and extent of the temperature-driven Doldrums’ influence on sea conditions, and thereby have an increased impact on the migration and foraging ability of Greater Shearwaters.

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I thank Chris Haney for reviewing this manuscript. Much of the information presented here results from my long-term sea bird studies while I was employed as Curator of Birds at the North Carolina State Museum. I appreciate the decades of support they provided to my research program. Specimens on which the above information is based are housed at that



institution. This report was prepared while working under contract for NOAA on the conservation status of western North Atlantic seabirds.

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American Woodcock, 31 Jan 2009, Cypress Point at Lake Phelps, North Carolina.  
Photo by Amy Williamson .



## Fifty Years Ago in *The Chat*—June 1959

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Articles in the June 1959 issue of *The Chat* included an open letter to Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson by Irston R. Barnes, with the editorial comment “It is disturbing to realize, in this day when the forces of law and order need all the respect they can command, that the statements of government departments are not wholly trustworthy.” The letter protested release by the Agriculture Department of a film titled *Fire Ant on Trial* which “wrongly creates the impression that where proper precautions are taken, wildlife is unharmed by the [fire ant] control program.”

The Spring CBC meeting in 1959 was held in Chapel Hill 8–10 May. The total number of species observed was 107, of which 22 were warblers, including Tennessee, Worm-eating and Cape May.

General Field Notes included a number of good records. A White-tailed Tropicbird was seen off Cape Hatteras 25 July 1958, and another one was reported captured 16 Oct 1954, the day after Hurricane Hazel, in a chicken pen in Dillon, SC. A group of birders from Virginia reported that during a visit to Cape Hatteras on 1 Feb 1959, they observed an immature Razorbill on the sand, an immature male Common Eider on the water, and two immature and one adult Black-legged Kittiwakes on the sand. All of these birds except for the adult kittiwake were observed to be oiled, the Razorbill to the extent that it could not fly, and the eider to the extent that it apparently could not fly. The kittiwakes could fly but were noted to be “tame” and allowed close approach. Remarkably, there is no speculation on how the birds came to be oiled, or any hint that this was considered either unusual or regrettable. Independently, Paul Sykes reported four immature Black-legged Kittiwakes at Hatteras on 14 Feb 1959, also observed at close range. John Funderburg and Robert F. Soots reported a Rough-legged Hawk in Wake County, NC on two occasions in the winter of 1959, described as the first piedmont record. John R. Gatewood reported a White-winged Dove along the south dike of North Pond at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge on 9 Nov 1958. This was apparently the second record from the refuge, the first having been on 23 June 1943. Ivan R. Tomkins reported an adult male Vermilion Flycatcher at the Savannah River Refuge on 10 January 1959, continuing until 20 March. This was thought to be the second record for South Carolina. John B. Hatcher reported two Warbling Vireos in his yard in Aiken County, SC, on 1–7 September 1958. This was apparently the second state record for the species.

In Briefs for the Files, which were truly brief in this era, Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge's first Swallow-tailed Kite was noted 20 May 1958. Three Warbling Vireos were reported heard and seen at Wilmington, NC, on the remarkable date of 25 March 1959 by Mrs. Appleberry (CBC President).

## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Winter 2008–2009, unless otherwise noted)

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*Briefs for the Files* is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	December 1–February 28	due March 20
Spring	March 1–May 31	due June 20
Summer	June 1–July 31	due August 20
Fall	August 1–November 30	due December 20

Reports can be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you type them and list the sightings according to the birds in checklist order (not according to dates or locations). If you submit your report to me through e-mail, please type your report directly into the message or copy it from a word processing program directly into the message. You may also attach your file to the e-mail, but if you do, please let me know the program used and also send a second version saved as a text (.txt) file.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in *Carolinabirds*. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from *Carolinabirds*. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

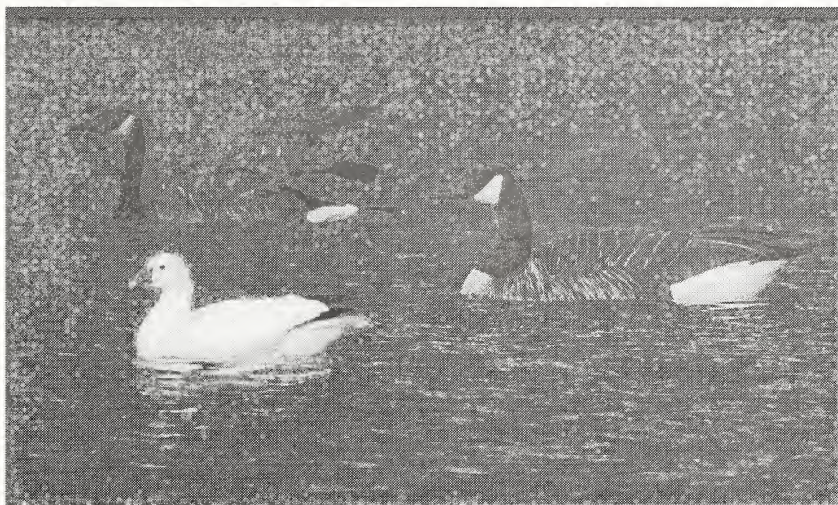
If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** As one would expect, all sightings this winter were made in South Carolina. Three were seen during the week of the Winyah Bay Christmas Bird Count (CBC), 18 Dec, and were a first for the count (Jamie Dozier, *fide* Lex Glover). An amazing count of 250 was made on the ACE Basin, SC, CBC 28 Dec (*fide* Pete Laurie). At Savannah NWR, a juvenile was seen 1 Jan (Sandy Beasley) and 6 Jan (Royce Hough); and an

adult was seen 9 Feb (James Fleullan) through 23 Feb (Andrew Core). Several reports made from the Myrtle Beach area were most likely sightings of the local domestic population.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** This species is a rare but regular winter visitor to the Carolinas. An immature was found at Savannah NWR, SC, 6 Jan (Royce Hough). In the mountains, one was seen at a pond in Etowah, NC, 29 Jan–15 Feb (Wayne Forsythe) and two were seen in the nearby Deer Lake subdivision, Brevard, NC, 21 Feb through the end of the period (Tom Joyce). Six were found in Allendale Co, SC, 16 Feb (Carroll Richard). An immature was found amongst Snow Geese in Snowden, NC, 27 Feb (Shirley Remaley).

**Snow Goose:** Some of the larger flocks seen during CBCs in the North Carolina coastal plain were 79,660 at Pocosin Lakes NWR (*vide* Doug LeQuire), 25,582 at Lake Mattamuskeet NWR (*vide* Allen Bryan), and 1,519 at Bodie-Pea Island (*vide* Paul Sykes). A good count for South Carolina, 600, was made on the McClellanville CBC, 21 Dec (*vide* National Audubon Society [NAS]). Sightings away from these typical sites included one found on the CBC in Morehead City, NC, 14 Dec (*vide* John Fussell); one photographed at Waccamaw Hospital, Murrells Inlet, SC, 6 Jan (Jerry Kerschner); nine (five light-morph and four dark-morph), found at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, 13 Jan (Steve Calver); a dark-morph in Efland, NC, throughout January (*vide* Norm Budnitz); and an immature dark-morph at Savannah NWR, SC, 15 Feb (Richard & Dorothy Rosche) through 23 Feb (Andrew Core). Rare mountain sightings included an immature dark-morph at VanWingerden Pond, Henderson Co, NC, 6 Dec (Marilyn Westphal); a light-morph in the Deer Lake subdivision of Brevard, NC, 6 Jan (Tom Joyce); and two in Etowah, NC, 28 Jan–15 Feb (Wayne Forsythe, Todd Arcos).



Ross's Goose, 13 Feb 2009, Winston-Salem, NC. Photo by David Disher.



**Ross's Goose:** This rare goose was found at multiple sites this winter, usually in the company of other species of geese. Sightings of individuals were made in Mooresville, NC, with Canada Geese, 23 Dec (Jonathan Cooley); at Pea Island NWR, NC, with Snow Geese, 30 Dec (Richard & Dorothy Rosche); at the Wright Brothers Memorial, Kitty Hawk, NC, with Canada Geese, 7 Jan (Derb Carter); in the Muddy Creek Greenway area of Winston-Salem, NC, with Canada Geese, 23 Jan (John Haire) through 20 Feb (Dennis Burnette, Gene Schepker); and in Murrells Inlet, SC, 30 Jan (Rosche). High concentrations were found at two sites in the coastal plain of North Carolina—at Lake Mattamuskeet NWR, where five were counted during the CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); and at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, NC, where at least eight were found grazing amongst Snow Geese, 30 Dec (Derb Carter). At least two were seen in the North Carolina mountains this winter, with multiple sightings made within a fifteen mile radius of Etowah, NC—one in the Deer Lake subdivision of Brevard, NC, 20 Dec, continuing “off and on” for several weeks (Tom Joyce); two off Bryson Rd in Etowah, NC, 28 Jan (Todd Arcos, Wayne Forsythe) and two on Lake Julian, Skyland, NC, 7 Feb (Forsythe, Ron Selvey).

**Brant:** Rare outside the Hatteras/Ocracoke Inlet area, one was seen at Lake Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, during the CBC, 29 Dec (Jeff Lewis).

**Cackling Goose:** Sightings of this smaller, former subspecies of Canada Goose were made of individuals at Lake Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, during the CBC, 29 Dec (Derb Carter, Ricky Davis); inside a large flock of Snow Geese at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, NC, 30 Dec (Carter); with a flock of Canada Geese in the Muddy Creek Greenway area of Winston-Salem, NC, 23 Jan (John Haire) through 20 Feb (Dennis Burnette, Gene Schepker); and amongst Canada Geese at North Pond, Pea Island, NWR, 24 Jan (Rich Boyd, Wade Fuller, Bob Holmes, Ken Wilkins). In the mountains, two were photographed at Warren Wilson College, Asheville, NC, 27 Dec (Todd Arcos) and two, possibly the same pair, were seen during the CBC in Brevard, NC, 30 Dec (Dick Blee) and were photographed 6 Jan (Wayne Forsythe).

**Mute Swan:** Possibly vagrants from the wild Chesapeake Bay population were eight at Pea Island NWR, NC, seen during the CBC, 28 Dec (*fide* Paul Sykes).

**Trumpeter Swan:** A group of four birds, three adults and one immature, was reported on a small pond on private property in Nash Co, NC, 20 Feb (Matthew Odress, *fide* Harry LeGrand) and reportedly had been present for “about the last two weeks.” In the following days, multiple birders observed and photographed these birds, which remained in the area through the end of the period (*fide* Ricky Davis). Though the birds showed no physical signs of captivity such as bands or clipped wings, they were reportedly tame enough to be hand-fed. If accepted by the NC Bird Records Committee, this sighting will provide the second state record.



Cackling Goose (with Canada Geese and Mallard), 13 Feb 2009, Winston-Salem, NC. Photo by David Disher.

**Tundra Swan:** Some of the higher totals from sites in the North Carolina coastal plain were 53,366 at Pocosin Lakes NWR, during the CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Doug LeQuire); 32,186 at Lake Mattamuskeet NWR, during the CBC 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); and 5800 at Alligator River NWR in early winter, as estimated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (*fide* Jeff Lewis). Outside the coastal plain, a high inland count of 17 was made on Lake Crabtree, NC, 5 Dec (Roger Shaw). Inland individuals were also found on Falls Lake, NC, during the Durham CBC, 14 Dec (Brian Bockhahn) and on Arrowhead Lake, NC, during the Pee Dee NWR CBC, 3 Jan (Tom & Tammy Sanders, Ron Clark, Steve Tracy). Coastal South Carolina CBCs found this species as far south as the ACE Basin, where 83 were seen 28 Dec (*fide* Pete Laurie).

**Eurasian Wigeon:** An adult male on Lilliput Pond, New Bern, NC, first seen 25 Nov, continued until 13 Feb (Al Gamache). One was found on the Winyah Bay, SC, CBC, 18 Dec (Bruce Peterjohn, Lex Glover). Three were found on the CBC at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan). One was photographed on North Pond, Pea Island NWR, NC, 28 Dec (Jeff Lewis) and seen again during a Carolina Bird Club field trip, 29 Jan (Lewis). Most notable though, was one seen quite far inland, at a private impoundment in NW Davidson Co, NC, 24–25 Dec (Ron Morris, Pat Stewart, Phil Dickinson, John Haire).

**Mottled Duck:** The pair in Sunset Beach, NC, was periodically seen on Lake Medcalf and West Lake throughout the period (Mary McDavit). Surprising at such a northerly location was a pair found on a lake in Roanoke Rapids, NC, 27 Dec (Richard & Dorothy Rosche). A winter high count of 60 was made on the ACE Basin, SC, CBC, 28 Dec (*fide* Pete Laurie).

**Northern Pintail:** US Fish and Wildlife reported a record number of 32,000 at Alligator River NWR, NC, in early winter (*fide* Jeff Lewis).



Conversely, CBC numbers for this species were way down (*vide* Ricky Davis), including only 960 counted during the Alligator River CBC, 30 Dec (*vide* Lewis). A good count for the mountains, 12, was made on Lake Osceola, NC, 25 Jan (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey).

**Canvasback:** Some of the more notable inland reports were of a female on Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC, 10 Dec (Vin Stanton) and 19 Dec (Terry Seyden); one at Four Seasons Marsh, Henderson Co, NC, 14 Jan (Todd Arcos); two on Salem Lake, NC, 21 Jan (John Haire); nine on Lake Townsend, N of Greensboro, NC, 21 Jan (Henry Link); and 150 on Brier Creek Reservoir, Wake Co, NC, 1 Feb (Harry LeGrand), with a piedmont high count of 300 made there two weeks later, 15 Feb (LeGrand). A count of “1300 to maybe 3000” in the center of Roanoke Rapids Lake, NC, 27 Dec (Frank Enders) was large, even for a site inside the coastal plain.

**Redhead:** Individuals seen during CBCs at Kerr Lake, NC, 2 Jan, and Falls Lake, NC, 5 Jan, were both firsts for those counts (Brian Bockhahn). A peak count of six was made on Jordan Lake, NC, 26 Feb (Phil Warren). 15 were found on Lake Crabtree, NC, 17 Jan (Harry LeGrand). One was seen on Lake Townsend, N of Greensboro, NC, 21 Jan (Henry Link). A male was found on Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC, 6 Feb (Aaron Steed). Two were seen on a gravel pit pond in Hillsborough, NC, 27 Feb (Barb Brooks).

**Ring-necked Duck:** A local high count of 4,140 was made on Harris Lake, NC, 17 Feb (Phil Warren).

**Tufted Duck:** A male with a relatively short tuft was discovered at Archie Elledge Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in Winston-Salem, NC, 30 Jan (Hop Hopkins) and was seen by more than 750 birders from multiple states through 14 Feb (*vide* Hopkins). If accepted by the NC Bird Records Committee, this sighting will provide the first documented sighting of this species in the Carolinas.

**Greater Scaup:** This species was found at several inland sites this winter. Thirty were seen at Brier Creek Reservoir, Raleigh, NC, 13 Dec (Harry LeGrand) and a high count of 100 was made there 1 Feb (LeGrand). An immature male was seen on Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC, 19 Dec (Terry Seyden) through 6 Feb (Aaron Steed). Three males were found on Lake Crabtree, NC, 17 Jan (LeGrand). Four were found on Salem Lake, NC, 21 Jan (John Haire). A female was seen at Archie Elledge WTP in Winston-Salem, NC, 31 Jan (LeGrand) through 11 Feb (Ali Iyooob). A female was found at Four Seasons Marsh, Henderson Co, NC, 21 Feb (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey).

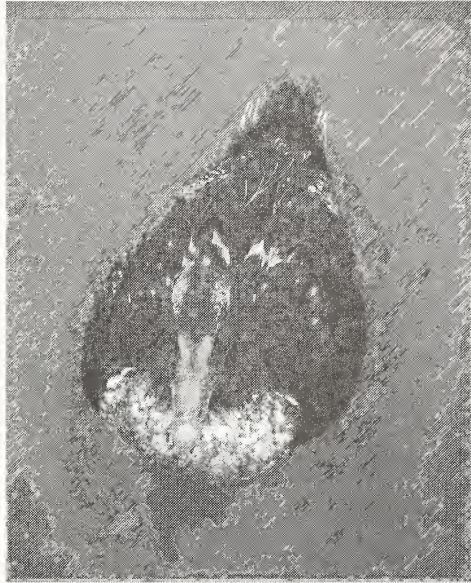
**Common Eider:** A rare but regular winter visitor to the Carolina coast, five were reported this period. A female was seen from the groin at Oregon Inlet, NC, 6 Dec (Andy Fairbanks, *vide* Jeff Lewis) through 16 Dec (Christian Newton). Another female was seen at the Cedar Island, NC, ferry terminal, 14 Dec (Brian Patteson) and 31 Dec (Richard & Dorothy Rosche). One was found feeding beneath a pier in Cherry Grove, SC, 19 Dec (Ritch Lilly). A female was present near the groin at the S end of Wrightsville Beach, NC, 25 Dec (Sam Cooper) through 22 Jan (Dean Edwards). An



immature male was seen from the fishing pier in Folly Beach, SC, 2 Jan (Andy Harrison) through 25 Jan (Chris Snook).

**Surf Scoter:** A very rare vagrant in the mountains, three were seen on Lake Junaluska, NC, 26 Dec (Connie and Stan Wulkowicz).

**White-winged Scoter:** Rare inland sightings included a female on Lake Hickory, NC, 22 Dec (Dwayne Martin); one on the Santee NWR, SC, CBC, 27 Dec (*vide* Dennis Forsythe); a female on Jordan Lake, NC, 17 Jan (Harry LeGrand, Derb Carter, Jeff Pippen); a pair on Salem Lake, NC, 21 Jan (John Haire); and an immature male at Archie Elledge WTP in Winston-Salem, NC, 28 Jan (Haire)



Common Eider, 3 Jan 2009, Folly Beach pier.  
Photo by Cathy Miller.

through 4 Feb (Phil Dickinson). Most notable, though, were the unusually high inland counts of 15, including an adult male, at Falls Lake, NC, 8 Jan, (Ricky Davis) and nine on Lake Townsend, NC, 21 Jan (Henry Link).

**Long-tailed Duck:** Locally common on the Pamlico Sound, this species is much less likely to be seen anywhere else along the coast. One was seen from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave Pier in Myrtle Beach, SC, 11 Jan (Ritch Lilly), with three seen there 18 Jan (Judy Walker) through 26 Jan (Richard & Dorothy Rosche), with two remaining 8 Feb (John Ennis), and only one present 22 Feb (Bob Maxwell). Five first-years, three females and two males, were seen from the rock outcroppings at Ft Fisher, NC, 19 Jan (Dean Edwards) through 24 Jan (Ennis). Three were seen from Kiawah Island, SC, 22 Jan (Aaron Given). Very rare inland sightings were made of three adult males on Lake Townsend, NC, 12 Dec (Henry Link) and of one male off Ebenezer Point, Jordan Lake, NC, 1 Jan (Kent Fiala).

**Common Goldeneye:** Sightings away from the coast included an adult male on Jordan Lake, NC, 5 Dec (Ricky Davis); an adult male at the WTP in Goldsboro, NC, 13 Dec (Eric Dean); a pair on Lake Pinehurst, NC, mid-December through the new year (Carol Bowman); three adult males on Lake Junaluska, NC, 22 Dec (Connie and Stan Wulkowicz); a female at the WTP in Conway, SC, 4 Jan (Chris Hill) through 8 Jan (Ritch Lilly); six on Lake Townsend, NC, 16 Jan (Henry Link); a female on Jordan Lake, NC, 17 Jan (Harry LeGrand, Derb Carter, Jeff Pippen); a pair at the Archie Elledge WTP in Winston-Salem, NC, 23–30 Jan (Gene Schepker, et al.), with the female

continuing through 11 Feb (Ali Iyoob); and a female, possibly the same bird there in November, on a pond in Meggett, SC, 25 Jan through the end of the period (Cherrie Sneed).

**Common Merganser:** Coastal reports were made of two females flying over the ocean at Atlantic Beach, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 14 Dec (Ricky Davis); a female at Oregon Inlet, NC, 28 Dec (John Fussell, Neal Moore); and two females on Twin Lakes, Sunset Beach, NC, 6 Feb (Richard & Dorothy Rosche). Inland sightings were made of one in Clemson, SC, during the CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* Drew Lanham); in Wayne Co, NC, during the CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* Eric Dean); three at Pettigrew SP, NC, during the CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Doug LeQuire); one on Lake Townsend, NC, 16–21 Jan (Henry Link); a pair on Lake Wheeler, NC, 14 Feb (Steve Shultz); and a pair on Lake Crabtree, NC, 21 Feb (Clyde Smith).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Notable inland sightings were made of two on the Lower Saluda, SC, CBC, 16 Dec (*fide* Jason Giovannone); 13 during the Southern Pines, NC, CBC, 21 Dec (*fide* Susan Campbell); an inland high count of 233 during the Pettigrew SP, NC, CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Doug LeQuire); a pair on Salem Lake, Winston-Salem, NC, 7 Jan (John Haire); and four in Waynesville, NC, 25 Feb (Blair Ogburn).

**Red-throated Loon:** Rare inland, individuals were found on Salem Lake, NC, 17 Dec (Royce Hough, John Haire) and at Jordan Lake, NC, during the CBC, 4 Jan (Todd Bishop, Chuck Byrd, Barbara Coffman, Kyle & Micky Mills, *fide* Norm Budnitz).

**Pacific Loon:** The bird on Lake Townsend, NC, first reported 18 Nov, continued until at least 3 Dec (Dan Chambers, *fide* Henry Link). Another was seen on the ocean from Wrightsville Beach, NC, 20 Jan (Dean Edwards).

**Horned Grebe:** Some notable inland concentrations included 110 in the cove W of Seaforth access, Jordan Lake, NC, 18 Dec (Nick Anich), with 152 there 22 Feb (Ricky Davis); 103 on Lake Crabtree, NC, 29 Dec (Steve Shultz); and 75 at Pee Dee NWR, NC, 29 Dec (John Scavetto).

**Red-necked Grebe:** Possibly the same bird seen for several months last winter was seen again on Lake Crabtree, NC, 3 Dec (Steve Shultz) through 6 Dec (Dan Kaplan). One was seen on Salem Lake, NC, 17–21 Dec (John Haire, Royce Hough) and another (same bird?) was seen there 25 Jan (Ann Newsome, Sven Halling), and stayed for about a week (*fide* Haire). One, transitioning out of winter plumage, was seen at the S end of Folly Beach, SC, 31 Jan (Shawn Hayes). “Two or three” were seen on the ocean from Pea Island, NC, 1 Feb (Linda Ward). One was found on Falls Lake, NC, from the Rolling View area, 21 Feb (Ricky Davis).

**Eared Grebe:** Individuals were seen from Ebenezer Point at Jordan Lake, NC, during the CBC, 4 Jan (Doug Pratt, Josh Southern, Sterling Southern); again at the same site 26 Feb (Nick Anich); and during the CBC on Hilton Head Island, SC, 14 Dec (*fide* Nan Lloyd). A high count of ten was made at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, 14 Jan (Steve Calver).



**Northern Fulmar:** This winter's high count was "over 100," seen during a pelagic trip from Hatteras, NC, 16 Feb (Brian Patteson). Other sightings included an individual 30 miles off Cape Lookout, NC, 10 Feb (Jack Fennell, *vide* John Fussell) and two SE of Cape Lookout, NC, 21 Feb (Ross McGregor).

**Black-capped Petrel:** This species is not often reported in winter, probably due to the small number of pelagic trips making it out to the Gulf Stream. Pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC found "maybe 10" on 7 Dec, "a few" on 27 Dec, and one on 28 Feb (Brian Patteson). Also, an individual was seen about 90 miles SE of Cape Lookout, NC, 21 Feb (Ross McGregor).

**Greater Shearwater:** Very rare in winter, "one or two" Greaters were seen during a pelagic trip from Hatteras, NC, 20 Feb, and one was seen 28 Feb (Brian Patteson).

**Sooty Shearwater:** Very rare in winter, one Sooty was sighted from a boat during the Hatteras, NC, CBC, 27 Dec, providing the first NC count day record (*vide* Patricia Moore).

**Manx Shearwater:** Though winter is one of the better times to find this cold-water pelagic species, only a few were reported this winter. One or two were seen during a pelagic trip from Hatteras, NC, 19 Jan, with another seen 28 Feb (Brian Patteson). One or two were seen SE of Cape Lookout, NC, 21 Feb (Ross McGregor).

**Audubon's Shearwater:** Rare in winter, "about half a dozen or so" Audubon's were seen SE of Cape Lookout, NC, 21 Feb (Ross McGregor).



American White Pelicans, 22 Feb 2009, Jordan Lake. Photo by Ricky Davis.

**American White Pelican:** Sightings of this species have been steadily increasing in recent years. Good numbers found on CBCs were 15 in the Hobucken Marshes IBA, Pamlico Co, NC, 16 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); 133 at Winyah Bay, SC, 18 Dec (*vide* Lex Glover); 108 in McClellanville, SC, 21 Dec (*vide* NAS); 10 at Pea Island NWR, NC, 28 Dec (*vide* Paul Sykes); 105 in the ACE Basin, SC, 28 Dec (*vide* Pete Laurie); and 64 at Lake Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 29 Dec (*vide* Allen Bryan). Eighteen were seen at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, 30 Dec (Steve Calver). Seventeen were sighted



in Spring Creek, NC, 24 Feb (Al Gamache, Steve Shaffer). Most interestingly, 10, an unusually high number for the piedmont, were seen from the Farrington Rd causeway on Jordan Lake, NC; 22 Feb (Ricky Davis), with three remaining 27 Feb (Shiloh Schulte).

**Great Cormorant:** A rare inland report was made of a first-year bird, found perched on a large electric transmission tower on Lake Townsend, NC, 22–23 Dec (Henry Link). Locally unusual coastal reports were of individuals seen at the groin on the S end of Wrightsville Beach, NC, 17 Dec–18 Jan (Dean Edwards); on the Winyah Bay, SC CBC 18 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover); perched on a buoy on the Pamlico Sound, NC, seen from the Ocracoke to Swan Quarter Ferry, 28 Dec (Eric Scholz, Michelle Smith); and on a piling at the ferry dock in Swan Quarter, NC, 30 Jan (Helmut Mueller). As usual, this species was seen at Oregon Inlet, NC, with two found during the Bodie-Pea Island CBC, 28 Dec (*fide* Paul Sykes) and one seen near the old ferry landing, 29 Jan (Jeff Lewis, et al.).

**Anhinga:** Notable winter sightings included at least two at a series of small ponds on the NW side of New Bern, NC, throughout the period (Al Gamache); and two at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 8 Dec (Jesse Pope) and 4 Jan (Jeff Lewis).

**Reddish Egret:** Rare winter reports were made of dark-morph individuals on Shackleford Banks, NC, 4 Dec (Derb Carter) and 6 Jan (Jacob Socolar), providing the first winter record for Carteret Co, NC (*fide* John Fussell); on Portsmouth Island, NC, during the CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Peter Vankevich); and on Hilton Head Island, SC, mid-December through 5 Feb (Dave Lovett, Carole Jorgensen).

**Cattle Egret:** Rare winter reports were made of individuals at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 11 Dec (Brian Patteson) and again during the CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Patricia Moore); off US 264, N of Swan Quarter, NC, 17 Jan (Ken Lundstrom); and feeding in a yard in Sunbury, NC, 7 Feb (Shirley Remaley).

**Green Heron:** Some of the more northerly reports were made of individuals on CBCs in Morehead City, NC, 14 Dec (*fide* John Fussell); in Kitty Hawk, NC, 20 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis); and in Plantersville, SC, during the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill). Quite unexpected in the mountains this time of year, one was found at Osceola Lake, NC, 7 Jan (Wayne Forsythe) and another (same bird?) was found 30 miles north, at Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC, 19 Jan (Ben Ringer).

**Glossy Ibis:** An unusually high winter count, 22, for such a northerly site was made during the CBC at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 29 Dec (Ricky Davis).

**Roseate Spoonbill:** Three lingered at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, until 16 Dec, with one remaining until 17 Jan (Steve Calver).

**Wood Stork:** Uncommon in winter, five were seen at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 7 Dec (Paul Serridge); and seven were seen flying over Spring Creek Impoundment, Goose Creek Game Lands, Pamlico/Beaufort Co, NC, 10 Jan (Chris Baranski, *fide* Harry LeGrand).

**Osprey:** Unusual winter sightings were made in Elizabeth City, NC, mid-December (Linda Ward); on the Southern Lake Norman CBC, 21 Dec (*fide* Taylor Piephoff); and at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 3 Jan (Clyde Sorenson). Five seen on the CBC in Morehead City, NC, comprised a record number for the count (*fide* John Fussell).

**Bald Eagle:** Unusual for the mountains were two adults seen along the French Broad River, Transylvania Co, NC, 3 Feb (Tom Joyce, Connie Ward, Stan Wulkowicz).

**Northern Goshawk:** This rare *Accipiter* was seen twice this winter—an adult flying over Six Forks Rd near the Beltline, Raleigh, NC, 1 Dec (Jim Mulholland) and an immature on James Island, Charleston, SC, 4 Feb (Dennis Forsythe).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** An adult seen at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 13 Dec (Rich Boyd), must have been very disoriented!

**Swainson's Hawk:** Two (!), one immature and one sub-adult, were found at Alligator River NWR, NC, during the CBC, 30 Dec (Wayne Irvin, Bob Lewis, Jeff Lewis, Ricky Davis, et al.) with the sub-adult being seen again 1 Jan (Davis) and 23 Jan (Josh Southern).

**"Kriders" Red-tailed Hawk:** A juvenile of this pale, Great Plains subspecies was seen at the North River Farms wetlands restoration area, Carteret Co, NC, mid-January through February (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, et al.). The observers got good looks at the bird several times and noted that "it perfectly matched" the illustration in the Sibley guide.

**Rough-legged Hawk:** This arctic *Buteo* occasionally wanders into the northern parts of our region each winter. This winter, individuals were reported over the pastures at MacAdam's Farm in Efland, NC, 8 Dec (Dave Snyder); and from Cheek Mountain Rd, near Sparta, NC, during the New River CBC, 20 Dec (Allen Boynton, Gale Kuebler) and was photographed there 3 Jan (John Haire). Notably, this is the first winter in years that this species has not been reported from Alligator River NWR, NC.

**Golden Eagle:** This winter's reports were of one, well-photographed, in front of the lodge at Donnelley WMA, SC, 8 Dec (Buddy Campbell); an adult male near Sparta, NC, found on the New River CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* Harrol Blevins) and seen again 22 Dec (John Haire); an adult at Alligator River NWR, NC, 2 Feb (Helmut Mueller); and a second-year bird at the airport N of Engelhard, NC, 17 Feb (Haire).

**Merlin:** Though regular in the coastal plain in winter, sightings in the piedmont and mountains are less common. An adult male was seen several times at Hillandale Golf Course in Durham, NC, 4 Dec–11 Jan (Dan Kaplan). Interestingly, the bird favored the same perch used by another Merlin seen there two years ago. The observer wondered if it was the "same bird or extraordinary coincidence?" Other piedmont/mountain sightings were made of individuals in Henderson Co, NC, 5 Dec (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey); at Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC, 24 Dec (Simon Thompson); in Shelby, NC, during the CBC, 1 Jan (*fide* JoAnn Martin); in Spartanburg, SC, during the CBC, 2 Jan (*fide* Lyle Campbell); at Lake Conestee Nature Park,

Greenville, SC, 5 Jan (Paul Serridge); and at Salem Lake, NC, 21 Jan (John Haire).

**American Coot:**

A locally unusual high count of 3100 was made at Harris Lake, NC, 17 Feb (Phil Warren).

**Sandhill Crane:**

This winter's reports were of two in a field off NC 24 in Swansboro, NC, throughout the period (John Fussell); three flying over Henderson Field, Wallace, NC, 14 Dec (Walter Harriman); 17 flying over the same field where a smaller flock was reported last winter, between Hobgood and Oak



Golden Eagle, 8 Dec 2008, Donnelley WMA, SC. Photo by Buddy Campbell.

City, NC, 23 Dec (Jacob Socolar); one seen during the CBC at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); 28 at Santee NWR, SC, 6 Jan (Jason Giovannone); three in a field along Amity Hill Rd in Cleveland, NC, 7 Jan (Chris Baranski, *fide* John Haire) through 7 Feb (Mike Boatwright); 30 flying over the marina in Georgetown, SC, 8 Feb (John Ennis); three in the Mills River area of Henderson Co, NC, 26 Feb (Wayne Forsythe, Linda Smith); and two in Beaufort, NC, in February (Guy Senter, *fide* Fussell).

**Snowy Plover:** One was seen on the far E end of Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, 27 Feb through the end of the period (Aaron Given).

**Wilson's Plover:** Several winter sightings were made of this typically warmer-weather plover. One was found on the Bird Shoal of the Rachel Carson Preserve, Carteret Co, NC, 3 Dec (John Fussell), and three were seen there during the Morehead City CBC, 14 Dec (Sam Cooper, *fide* Fussell). One was found on Hilton Head Island, SC, during the CBC, 14 Dec (*fide* Nan Lloyd) and was seen through 9 Feb (Tom Prestby). Three were seen on Kiawah Island, SC, 22 Jan (Aaron Given). Individuals were also seen at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 24 Jan (Bruce Smithson) and at a pond in Meggett, SC, 25 Jan (Dan & Cherrie Sneed).

**Semipalmated Plover:** A very high concentration, 1400–1500, was observed on the N end of Hilton Head Island, SC, 31 Dec (Dave Lovett, Carole Jorgensen).



**Piping Plover:** The highest counts were 19 in Morehead City, NC, found during the CBC, 14 Dec (*fide* John Fussell) and 15 on the N end of Hilton Head Island, SC, 8 Feb (Tom Prestby).

**Black-necked Stilt:** Three to five were present at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, where this species has wintered before, throughout the period (Steve Calver). The only other report of this species was of one at Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center, Georgetown Co, SC, seen on the Winyah Bay CBC 18 Dec (Bruce Peterjohn, *fide* Lex Glover) and again 12 Feb (Richard & Dorothy Rosche).

**American Avocet:** The highest counts were 797 at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 30 Dec (Steve Calver); at least 200 at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 15 Jan (Liz Lathrop, et al.); and 600 at Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center, Georgetown Co, SC, 12 Feb (Richard & Dorothy Rosche).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Locally out-of-season individuals were found on Sandling Beach, Falls Lake, NC, during the CBC, 5 Jan (Brian Bockhahn); on the edge of the Catawba River at Riverbend Park, Conover, NC, 25 Jan (Dwayne Martin); and at Lake Julian, Skyland, NC, 22 Feb (Vin Stanton).

**Whimbrel:** This winter's best counts were seven on Shackleford Banks, NC, 6 Jan (Jacob Socolar) and 17 on the mudflats on the N end of Hilton Head Island, SC, 9 Feb (Tom Prestby).

**Long-billed Curlew:** Sightings of this large and distinctive shorebird were made at two of the traditional sites—one on Shackleford Banks, NC, 13 Dec (Derb Carter, *fide* John Fussell) and four at Cape Romain NWR, SC, 10 Feb (Richard Rosche, John Cox).

**Marbled Godwit:** Unusual inland, four were at Lake Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 8 Dec (Jesse Pope, et al.), and three remained there for the CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** Fall migrants typically depart the Carolinas by November and are not known to over-winter here. Thus, of interest was the individual found at the Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center, Georgetown, SC, on the Winyah Bay CBC, 18 Dec (Bruce Peterjohn, *fide* Lex Glover).

**Purple Sandpiper:** This wintering sandpiper was found at its favored sites throughout the period, on rock groins (jetties) at Oregon Inlet, NC, with a high count of three on 16 Dec (Christian Newton); at Fort Macon, Atlantic Beach, NC, with a high count of three on 17 Jan (Ross McGregor); three to four at the S end of Wrightsville Beach, NC, 18 Jan (Dean Edwards); and one at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 8 Feb (John Ennis).

**Dunlin:** A high count of 6022 was made at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 30 Dec (Steve Calver).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** At the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, the only known regular wintering site for this species in the Carolinas, 62 were counted 16 Dec, and a few remained throughout the period (Steve Calver). The only other report this period was of one at the Bodie Island, NC, Lighthouse Pond, 1 Feb (Helmut Mueller).

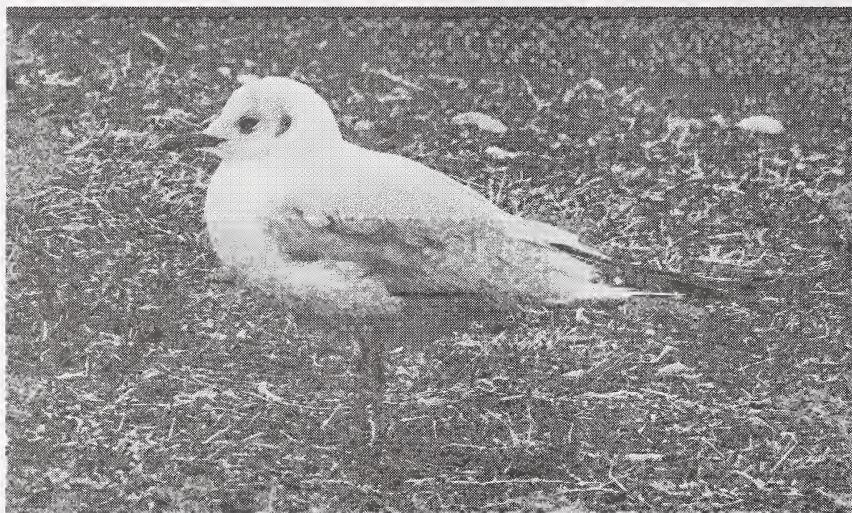
**Ruff:** A female (Reeve) was found at Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center, Georgetown Co, SC, during the Winyah Bay CBC, 18 Dec (Bruce Peterjohn,

*fide* Lex Glover). Another Reeve (same bird?) was seen at Bear Island WMA, SC, 21 Feb (*fide* Chris Snook) and 26 Feb (Ron Clark).

**Red Phalarope:** Very rarely seen inland, one was photographed at the Hickory Hill boat ramp on Falls Lake, NC, during the Durham CBC, 14 Dec (Brian Bockhahn) and was seen again 15 Dec (Nick Anich). The highest ocean counts were an estimated 1000 seen 30 miles off Cape Lookout, NC, 10 Feb (Jack Fennell, *fide* John Fussell) and 800–900 seen SE of Cape Lookout, NC, 21 Feb (Ross McGregor).

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** Only one was reported this winter—a first-winter bird (Tarrock) photographed on Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 25 Jan (Harry LeGrand, Ricky Davis, Derb Carter, Jeff Pippen).

**Black-headed Gull:** At least four Black-headed Gulls were seen in the Carolinas this winter. Sightings of adults on the Outer Banks, NC, which were possibly all sightings of the same bird, were made in Kitty Hawk, NC, during the CBC, 20 Dec (Ricky Davis); in Nags Head, NC, 21 Dec (Davis); at Pea Island NWR, NC, 27 Dec (Jeff Lewis); and next to a small pond in Kill Devil Hills, NC, 8–23 Feb (Lewis). Two were found at Lake Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, during the CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); and one was seen there 17 Jan (Christian Newton); and again 5 Feb (Newton). At the WTP in Conway, SC, a first-winter bird was seen by multiple observers 8 Jan (Ritch Lilly) through 28 Jan (Richard & Dorothy Rosche).



Black-headed Gull, 22 Feb 2009, Kill Devil Hills, NC. Photo by Kent Fiala.

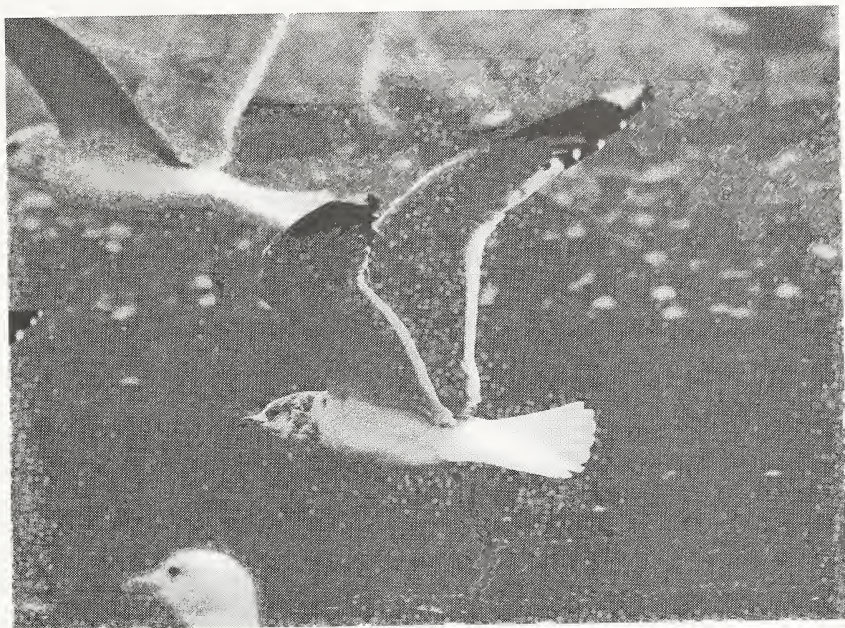
**Little Gull:** Sightings of this small, rare gull, which often associates with Bonaparte's Gulls, included an adult at South Nags Head Beach, NC, 21 Dec (Ricky Davis); an adult at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 15 Feb (Brian Patteson); one seen during a pelagic trip from Hatteras, NC, 16 Feb (Patteson); and an adult on Daniel Island, SC, 24 Feb (Shawn Hayes).

**Laughing Gull:** Rare inland in winter, individuals were found at Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, 5 Dec (Ricky Davis) and at Roanoke Rapids Lake,



NC, 4 Jan (Brian Bockhahn). A migrating flock of about 450 was seen flying very high in arrow-shaped formations, heading SE over Trenton, NC, 6 Dec (Davis). Three were found inside a huge inland gull flock, S of Scotland Neck, NC, 6 Feb (Davis).

**Mew (Common) Gull:** This European vagrant was discovered at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 24 Jan (Wade Fuller, Bob Holmes, Ken Wilkins, Rich Boyd) and photographed later that day (Brian Patteson). This sighting constitutes the fourth state record, with all records made at this same location.



Mew (Common) Gull, 24 Jan 2009, Cape Point, NC. Photo by Brian Patteson.

**Ring-billed Gull:** Some of the larger inland flocks were an estimated 28,000 at Jordan Lake, NC, seen during the CBC, 4 Jan (Diana Davis, Tom Krakauer) and 16,000+ in a field S of Scotland Neck, NC, 6 Feb (Ricky Davis).

**California Gull:** Only one was reported this winter—an adult seen at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 15 Feb (Brian Patteson).

**Herring Gull:** A good inland count of 226 was made at Jordan Lake, NC, during the CBC, 4 Jan (*fide* Norm Budnitz).

**Thayer's Gull:** Only one was reported this winter—an adult seen at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 15 Feb (Brian Patteson).

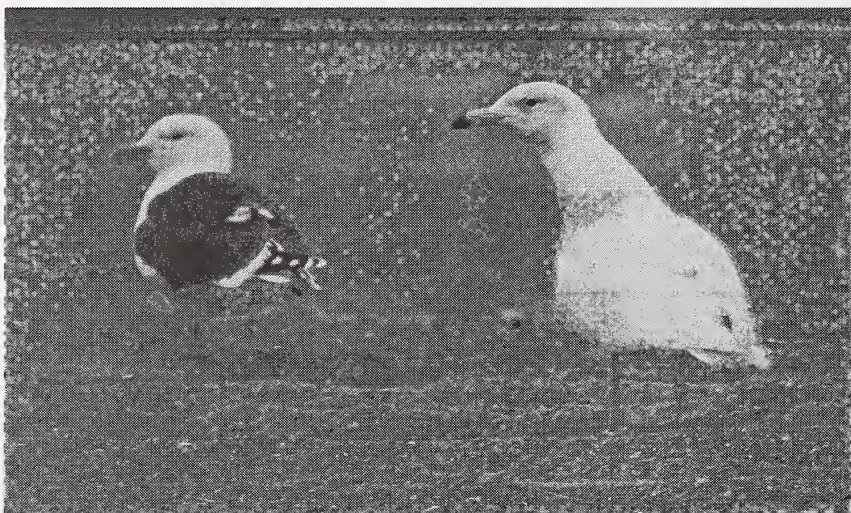
**Iceland Gull:** There were four sightings made of this rare, mostly-white gull. A first-year bird was found in White Plains, NC, during the Lake Mattamuskeet CBC, 29 Dec (John Fussell). A first-winter bird was seen at the WTP in Conway, SC, 8 Jan (Chris Hill) through 28 Jan (Richard & Dorothy Rosche). An adult was found at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 15 Feb



(Brian Patteson). A first-winter bird was seen during a pelagic trip from Hatteras, NC, 21 Feb (Patteson).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** A high count of 160 was made at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 11 Dec (Brian Patteson) and 120 were still there 25 Jan (Harry LeGrand). Rare inland reports included a third-year on Falls Lake, NC, 8 Jan (Ricky Davis); an adult on Jordan Lake, NC, 12 Jan (Nick Anich) and 17 Jan (LeGrand, Derb Carter, Jeff Pippen); 31, an amazing inland count, with a huge gull flock in a field S of Scotland Neck, NC, 6 Feb (Davis); and an adult on Lake Wheeler, NC, 14 Feb (Steve Shultz). The southernmost sighting was made on Kiawah Island, SC, 23 Feb (Aaron Given).

**Glaucous Gull:** Most notable were the two “chase-able” individuals in the Carolinas this winter—a first-winter bird in the vicinity of Pea Island NWR, NC, seen by multiple observers 15 Dec (John Haire) through 1 Feb (Ron Clark) and another first-winter bird at the WTP in Conway, SC, seen by multiple observers 8 Jan (Chris Hill) through 28 Jan (Richard & Dorothy Rosche). Other sightings were one at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 5 Dec (Derb Carter, *vide* Brian Patteson); one (same bird?) at the same site, 26 Jan (Christian Newton); an immature on the Pamlico Sound, NC, seen from the Ocracoke to Swan Quarter ferry, 28 Dec (Eric Scholz, Michelle Smith); and two first-year birds seen during a pelagic trip from Hatteras, NC, 19 Jan, with one also seen 28 Feb (Patteson).



First-cycle Glaucous Gull (right, with Great Black-backed Gull), 26 Jan 2009, Cape Point, NC. Photo by Christian Newton.

**Great Black-backed Gull:** Farther inland than usual were a first-year bird on Jordan Lake, NC, 12 Jan (Nick Anich) and 17 Jan (Harry LeGrand, Derb Carter, Jeff Pippen); and one at Falls Lake, NC, during the Durham CBC, 14 Dec (Brian Bockhahn).

**Black Skimmer:** The sighting of a juvenile over the catfish ponds along Newland Road near Pettigrew SP, NC, during the CBC, 29 Dec (Ed Corey) is quite interesting in that most inland skimmer sightings are usually associated with hurricanes.

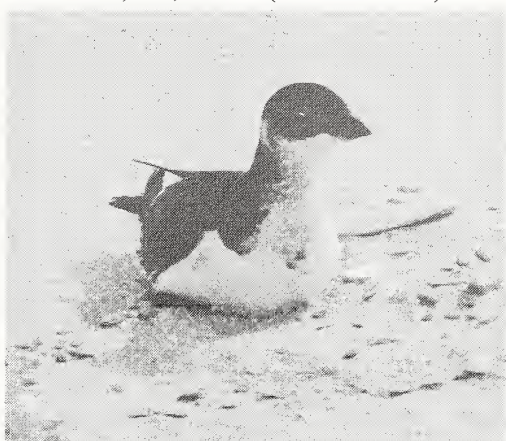
**Great Skua:** Winter is the only season this rare vagrant is seen in the waters off the Carolinas. Individuals were found on pelagic trips from Hatteras, NC, 14, 16, and 28 Feb (Brian Patteson).

**Pomarine Jaeger:** A good find in winter, a dark-morph was found on a pelagic trip from Hatteras, NC, 6 Dec (Brian Patteson) and two light-phase adults were seen flying off Nags Head, NC, 21 Dec (Ricky Davis).

**Parasitic Jaeger:** Three light-morph adults were seen flying N, off the Avalon pier in Kitty Hawk, NC, during the CBC, 20 Dec (Ricky Davis) and another was seen from Nags Head, NC, 21 Dec (Davis). Also, an individual was found on a pelagic trip from Hatteras, NC, 16 Feb (Brian Patteson).

**Dovekie:** In general, sightings were not as numerous as they were during last winter's irruption.

However, numbers were still good this year, and a count of 124 during a pelagic trip from Hatteras, NC, 21 Feb (Brian Patteson) exceeded last year's one-day total of 100+. Reports included one seen in Nags Head, NC, 23 Dec (Audrey Whitlock, *fide* Ricky Davis); two found on the



Dovekie, 19 Feb 2009, North Core Banks. Photo by Jon Altman.

beach in Corolla, NC, 17 Jan, and taken to a wildlife rehabilitator (*fide* Jeff Lewis); one found in a yard in Nags Head, NC, 18 Jan, taken to a rehabilitator, and released just W of Diamond Shoals, NC, 19 Jan, during a pelagic trip in which 13 others were seen (Patteson); and one, appearing in good health, found on the beach after a night of strong winds on North Core Banks, NC, 19 Feb (Joe Altman).

**Thick-billed Murre:** An individual seen near the jetty at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal, NC, 26 Dec (Derb Carter), provided this winter's only report.

**Razorbill:** CBCs found thirteen in NC—three in Kitty Hawk, 20 Dec (Ricky Davis); six in Wilmington, 3 Jan (*fide* Sam Cooper); and four at Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, 4 Jan (*fide* Juanita Roushdy). One was seen from the Ocracoke to Hatteras Ferry, NC, during a Chapel Hill Bird Club field trip 18 Jan (Bruce Young). Four were seen flying S over the ocean from Kill Devil Hills, NC, 14 Feb and again 16 Feb (Scott Baron, Elisa Enders). One was found a few miles off Cape Lookout, NC, 21 Feb (Ross



McGregor). A high count of 133 was made during a pelagic trip from Hatteras, NC, 14 Feb (Brian Patteson). Noteworthy for its “not-on-the-ocean” location was one seen inside the harbor in Beaufort, NC, 27 Feb (Clyde Adkins, *fide* John Fussell).

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Some of the higher counts were 60 in Morehead City, NC, on the CBC, 14 Dec, which was a record number for the count (*fide* John Fussell); a flock of 30–40 in Marshville, NC, 23 Dec (Josh Southern); 76 on the Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC, CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill); and six in Ocracoke Village, NC, 7 Feb (David Bridge).

**White-winged Dove:** Two reports were made this period—one photographed in a yard near Holden Beach, NC, 1 Dec (John Ennis) and one seen perched on a telephone wire near Garden City Beach, Horry Co, SC, 30 Dec (Dennis Forsythe).

**Common Ground-Dove:** Sightings of this declining species included two in Aiken, SC, during the CBC, 24 Dec (*fide* Calvin Zippler); seven in Charleston, SC, during the CBC, 4 Jan (*fide* Jeff Mollenhauer); and one at Bear Island WMA, SC, 22 Feb (Andrew Core).

**Barn Owl:** Reports included two at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 14 Dec (Rich Boyd); one continuing its residency on a private farm in Alleghany Co, NC, where it was counted on the New River CBC, 20 Dec (James Coman, Phil Dickinson); one photographed during the Southern Lake Norman CBC, 21 Dec (Jeff Lemons); one found at Alligator River NWR, NC, during the CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis); one seen at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, NC, 23 Jan (Boyd); one found on Deveaux Bank, SC, 9 Feb (Chris Snook); and one seen flying over US 64 just before sunrise, W of Creswell, NC, 15 Feb (Ricky Davis).

**Long-eared Owl:** Though not seen, one was heard calling at Garriss (Moore’s) Landing in Charleston, SC, 4 and 6 Jan (Hal Currey).

**Short-eared Owl:** Reports were made of individuals in McClellanville, SC, during the CBC, 21 Dec (*fide* NAS); at Alligator River NWR, NC, on the CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis) and on the W end of Daniel Island, SC, 29 Jan (Shawn Hayes).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** Known to sporadically winter in evergreen patches along the coast, at least two Saw-whets were heard along the entrance road to the Bodie Island Lighthouse Pond, NC, 8 Dec (Jesse Pope) and 4 Jan (Jacob Socolar).

**Chuck-will’s-widow:** Surprisingly, one was seen at midday, flying across NC 12 on Ocracoke Island, NC, during the CBC, 31 Dec (*fide* Peter Vankevich).

**Broad-billed Hummingbird:** The adult male that had visited a feeder in New Bern, NC, since last summer continued until a cold spell in early February (*fide* Al Gamache).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** At least 112 were seen in the Carolinas this winter (*fide* Ken Blankenship). Some of the better counts were four or five, three of which were adult males, wintering in a yard in Morehead City, NC (John Fussell); five wintering in a yard in Wilmington, NC (Amy



Williamson); “at least four” feeding around *Elaeagnus* flowers at two shrubby sites in Morehead City, 4 Dec (Fussell); ten banded at a feeder in Rockville, SC, 13 Dec (Doreen Cubie); 26 on the CBC in Kitty Hawk, 20 Dec (*vide* Jeff Lewis); and 18 on the CBC in Hatteras, NC, 27 Dec (*vide* Patricia Moore).

**Black-chinned Hummingbird:** Three were reported this winter—the female banded at a feeder in New Bern, NC, 23 Nov, continued until 21 Jan (*vide* Al Gamache); an immature male was banded at a feeder in Rockville, SC, 13 Dec (Doreen Cubie); and a female was banded at a feeder in Raleigh, NC, 16 Dec (Lena Gallitano, Susan Campbell).

**Calliope Hummingbird:** An immature male was banded at a feeder on Lake Lanier near Landrum, SC, 13 Dec (Doreen Cubie). In North Carolina, one was seen on the Tryon CBC, 20 Dec (*vide* Simon Thompson).

**Rufous Hummingbird:** At least thirteen were reported in the Carolinas this winter (*vide* Ken Blankenship). Banded adult males continued for the fourth straight winter in Morehead City, NC (Carol Reigle, *vide* John Fussell) and in N Raleigh, NC (*vide* Susan Campbell). Some of the higher concentrations were three females banded in Hickory, NC, by 3 Dec (Dwayne Martin) and four counted on the CBC in Charlotte, NC, 27 Dec (*vide* Ken Kneidel).

**Allen’s Hummingbird:** One returned for the third winter in a row to a yard W of Columbia, SC (*vide* Doreen Cubie) and was recorded on the Lower Saluda, SC, CBC, 16 Dec (*vide* Jason Giovannone).

**Least Flycatcher:** One was found at the Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center, Georgetown Co, SC, during the Winyah Bay CBC, 18 Dec (Chris Hill, Felicia Sanders, Paige Grooms) and heard vocalizing later that day (Lex Glover, Bruce Peterjohn). Another was seen and heard in the “sparrow field” area of Patriot’s Point, Mt Pleasant, SC, 24 Jan–8 Feb (Bill Dobbins).

**Ash-throated Flycatcher:** One was discovered near Catfish Lake, Croatan NF, NC, 2 Dec (Nathan Swick) and was seen by many through 17 Dec (Jim O’Donnell, Andy Webb). Another (same bird?) was seen in a yard in nearby James City, NC, 19–24 Dec (Diana Burke). The best spot in the Carolinas for this species, Alligator River NWR, NC, had one that was seen on its CBC, 30 Dec (Derb Carter, Jeff Lewis, Ricky Davis). Most interesting was one seen at Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, 16 Jan (Steve Shultz), as this species is not documented in the piedmont.

**Tropical/Couch’s Kingbird:** A kingbird of one of these two species was seen and photographed, but not heard vocalizing, during a Sierra Club field trip to Santee Coastal Reserve, SC, 7 Feb (David McLean, Bob Bradley), and relocated 8 Feb (*vide* Dennis Forsythe), but not seen again after that. Neither species has been previously documented in South Carolina; if accepted by the Bird Records Committee this would be the first state record of the species pair.

**Western Kingbird:** Two were reported this period—one seen on private property in Mann’s Harbor, NC, 19 Dec (*vide* Jeff Lewis) and one repeatedly

seen in the “sparrow field” area of Patriot’s Point, Mt Pleasant, SC, from December (Billy McCord) through 1 Feb (Bill Dobbins).

### **Loggerhead**

**Shrike:** One found in a grassy, undeveloped subdivision during the Morehead City, NC, CBC, 14 Dec (Ricky Davis), was unusual because “shrikes have been virtually absent in (the) area since about 1980” (*fide* John Fussell).

### **White-eyed Vireo:**

One found in a yard in Mill Creek, NC, 6 Dec, was “almost certainly the same bird that overwintered (here) last year” (Jack Fennell, *fide* John Fussell). Other notable northern and/or inland sightings of individuals were made on CBCs in Raleigh, NC, 20 Dec



Ash-throated Flycatcher, 2 Dec 2008, Croatan NF, NC. Photo by Nathan Swick.

(*fide* John Connors); in Hatteras, NC, 27 Dec (*fide* Patricia Moore); in Southern Pines, NC, 27 Dec (*fide* Susan Campbell); at Pettigrew SP, NC, 29 Dec (*fide* Doug LeQuire); and at Alligator River NWR, NC, 30 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis). Three found on the CBC at the Congaree Swamp, SC, 14 Dec, constituted a good count for that inland location. One found in a power line cut off NC 96, NE Wake Co, NC, 21 Feb, was either “a wintering bird or a very early spring migrant” (Ricky Davis, Duncan Frazier).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** Some of the farther inland sightings were made during CBCs at Hanging Rock SP, NC, 14 Dec (*fide* Phil Dickinson); at Southern Lake Norman, NC, 21 Dec (*fide* Taylor Piephoff); in Charlotte, NC, 27 Dec (*fide* Ken Kneidel); in Shelby, NC, 1 Jan (*fide* JoAnn Martin); and in the Catawba Valley, NC, 3 Jan (*fide* Dwayne Martin).

**Common Raven:** Continuing their expansion in the Carolinas, ravens were seen east of their typical range at Archie Elledge WTP, Winston-Salem, NC, throughout the period (*fide* Phil Dickinson); at David B Waymer park in Huntersville, NC, where one was photographed during the Southern Lake Norman CBC, 21 Dec (Jeff Lemons, Alan Kneidel), providing the first documented record for Mecklenburg Co; around the quarry between Umstead SP and Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, 10 Jan (Erik Thomas), 24

Feb (Ed Corey), and 26 Feb (Mike Tove); flying over Old Oxford Hwy just NE of Durham, NC, 23 Feb (Tove); and off US 321, a mile N of York, SC, 23 Feb (Ron Clark).

**Horned Lark:** Locally unusual was the high number, 150–200, seen at Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 14 Dec (Wayne Forsythe). Sightings of this species were firsts for CBCs in Morehead City, NC, 14 Dec (*fide* John Fussell) and Alligator River NWR, NC, 30 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis).

**Tree Swallow:** Far inland for winter were individuals found at Arrowhead Lake, Anson Co, NC, during the Pee Dee NWR CBC, 3 Jan (Tom & Tammy Sanders, Ron Clark, Steve Tracy) and at Ecusta Pond in Pisgah NF, near Brevard, NC, 19 Feb (Tom Joyce).

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Rare winter sightings were made at Merchant's Shell Pond, New Bern, NC 7 Dec (Al Gamache); at the Sheraton pier in Atlantic Beach, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 14 Dec (Jim O'Donnell, Andy Webb, *fide* John Fussell); at the WTP in Georgetown, SC, 17 Jan (Richard & Dorothy Rosche); and at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, 17 Jan (Steve Calver).

**Cave Swallow:** Lingering from the fall influx were three at the catfish ponds in Creswell, NC, 2 Dec (Josh Southern), with one remaining 26 Dec (Ricky Davis); one on Hilton Head Island, SC, 14 Jan (Dave Lovett); and four to six perched underneath US 64 at the Vernon James Research Center in Roper, NC, 17 Jan (Ken Lundstrom). Also, a carcass was found at the Rest Area on NC 17 in Dismal Swamp SP, NC, 18 Dec (*fide* John Gerwin).

**Barn Swallow:** Rare winter sightings were made of one at the catfish ponds in Creswell, NC, 26 Dec (Ricky Davis) and of two on the Sun City-Okatie, SC, CBC, 14 Dec (*fide* Helen Chatterton).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Not irrupting like last winter, the species gave a handful of sightings, the most southeastern of which was one individual on Kiawah Island, SC, 28 Feb (Aaron Given).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Some of the more northern and/or inland sightings were made on CBCs in Wayne Co, NC, where two were found 20 Dec (*fide* Eric Dean); at Lake Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, where 11 were found, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); and at Jordan Lake, NC, 4 Jan, where one was found by Bob Chase and Shelley Theye (*fide* Norm Budnitz).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** Well-reported in the coastal plain, John Fussell notes that "In December, this species seemed as common as I've ever observed." Some of the farther inland sightings were made at a suet feeder in Whispering Pines, NC, 1–27 Dec (Susan Campbell); at Evergreen Nature Preserve, Charlotte, NC, 14 Dec (Larry Barden); in Gastonia, NC, on the CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* Steve Tracy); and in Spartanburg, SC, on the CBC, 2 Jan (*fide* Lyle Campbell).

**Nashville Warbler:** Though this species is known to very rarely winter in the eastern part of our region, one seen at the Evergreen Nature Preserve, Charlotte, NC, 6 Dec (*fide* Larry Barden) and 11 Jan (Jill Palmer) was much farther inland than expected. Another apparent wintering bird was found at a



less unexpected location, along the causeway at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, during the CBC, 29 Dec (Jeff Lewis).

**Northern Parula:** Two were found at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, during the CBC 29 Dec—one along the causeway (Jeff Lewis) and another in the Lake Landing area (Ricky Davis). The only other winter sighting was made in Hatteras, NC, where one was seen during the CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Patricia Moore).

**Yellow Warbler:** A rare but regular winterer, one was seen on Roanoke Island, NC, during the Kitty Hawk CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis) and two were found along the causeway at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, during the CBC, 29 Dec (Lewis).

**Cape May Warbler:** Extremely rare but not unprecedented in winter, one, most likely a male due to bright coloration, was found on Harbor Drive, along the Neuse River, in New Bern, NC, 27 Jan (Al Gamache, Steve Shaffer).

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** A male seen in the Elizabethan Gardens, Roanoke Island, NC, 26 Jan (*fide* Jeff Lewis) was very unexpected sight for the season.

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** This is another very rare wintering warbler, and individuals were seen in the Elizabethan Gardens, Roanoke Island, NC, 8 Jan (Jeff Lewis) and on the campus of USC, Columbia, SC, 21 Jan–2 Feb (John Grego).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** Northerly winterers visited feeders in Wilmington, NC, throughout the period (Amy Williamson) and in Elizabeth City, NC, 4 Jan–6 Feb (Shirley Remaley). One found singing at Webb Wildlife Center, Hampton Co, SC, 15 Feb (Tom Prestby) was possibly the earliest of this year's spring arrivals. A dozen or more were singing in Meggett, SC, by 27 Feb (Cherrie Sneed).

**Prairie Warbler:** CBC reports of this rare but regular winterer totaled three on Hilton Head Island, SC, 14 Dec (*fide* Nan Lloyd), two in Morehead City, NC, 14 Dec (*fide* John Fussell); one at Winyah Bay, SC, 18 Dec (Lex Glover); one in McClellanville, SC, 21 Dec (*fide* NAS); six (!) at Cape Hatteras, NC, 27 Dec (*fide* Patricia Moore); three at Lake Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); one on Portsmouth Island, NC, 30 Dec (*fide* Peter Vankevich); one in Wilmington, NC, 3 Jan (*fide* Sam Cooper); one in Greenville, NC, 4 Jan (*fide* Veronica Pantelidis); and two on Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC, 4 Jan (*fide* Juanita Roushdy).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** Well-reported this winter, the species' higher CBC numbers were 30 at Santee NWR, SC, CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe); 19 on Hilton Head Island, SC, 14 Dec (*fide* Nan Lloyd); ten in the ACE Basin, SC, 28 Dec (*fide* Pete Laurie); six in Sun City-Okatie, SC, 14 Dec (*fide* Helen Chatterton); six at Cape Hatteras, NC, 27 Dec (*fide* Patricia Moore); six on Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill); five at Lake Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); four in Wilmington, NC, 3 Jan (*fide* Sam Cooper); and four on Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC, 4 Jan (*fide* Juanita Roushdy).

Notable northern and/or inland sightings were made of individuals in the Elizabethan Gardens, Roanoke Island, NC, where one apparently wintered, 17 Dec through the end of the period (Jeff Lewis); at Jordan Lake, NC, during the Chapel Hill CBC, 21 Dec (Doug Shadwick, *fide* Will Cook); during the week of the CBC in Charlotte, NC, 27 Dec (*fide* Ken Kneidel); and in a yard in Elizabeth City, NC, 2 Jan (Shirley Remaley).

**American Redstart:** Very rare in winter, one was found during the CBC on Hilton Head Island, SC, 14 Dec (*fide* Nan Lloyd).

**Ovenbird:** One wintered in a yard on Roanoke Island, NC, where it regularly visited the bird feeders, 5 Dec through end of the period (Jeff Lewis). Nine were found in Buxton, NC, a known wintering site, during the Hatteras CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Patricia Moore) and one was seen again there 15 Feb



(Scott Baron, Elisa Enders). Singles were also found on CBCs in McClellanville, SC, 21 Dec (*fide* NAS) and on Litchfield-Pawleys Island, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill).

Ovenbird, 17 Dec 2008, Roanoke Island, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

**Northern Waterthrush:** Assumed winterers were “at least two” at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, a known wintering site, throughout the period (Steve Calver); one found on the nature trail loop across from the HQ at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 1 Feb (Kent Fiala, Richard Brown); and one seen at Savannah NWR, SC, 8 Feb (Carroll Richard).

**Wilson’s Warbler:** Only one was reported this winter—an adult male, photographed in Morehead City, NC, during the CBC, 14 Dec (Ricky Davis).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** This rare-but-regular winterer along on the coast was found at three different sites in Carteret Co, NC—in Morehead City, 4 Dec (John Fussell); and during the Morehead City CBC, 14 Dec, in Beaufort (Eric Dean, Gene Howe) and at North River Farms (Jamie Cameron, et al.). Other CBC sightings included one at Cape Hatteras, NC, 27 Dec (*fide* Patricia Moore); one on Bodie-Pea Island NWR, NC, 28 Dec (*fide* Paul Sykes); two at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 29 Dec, (*fide* Allen Bryan); and two on Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, 4 Jan (*fide* Juanita Roushdy).

**Summer Tanager:** Very rare winter sightings were made of individuals on Hilton Head Island, SC, during the CBC, 14 Dec (*fide* Nan Lloyd); visiting a feeder in Wilmington, NC, 14 Jan–26 Feb (Amy Williamson); and



in the “sparrow field” area of Patriot’s Point, Mt Pleasant, SC, where an immature male was seen 24 Jan–1 Feb (Bill Dobbins).

**Western Tanager:** Two were reported at feeders this winter—a male in Wilmington, NC, 17 Jan, almost daily through the end of the period (Bruce & Melinda Jones) and another in Conway, SC, 17 Jan (Steve Berkowitz, *vide* KC Foggin).



Western Tanager, 20 Feb 2009, near Wilmington, NC. Photo by Bruce Jones.

**Spotted Towhee:** An adult male, alternately reported as an aberrant Eastern Towhee, was seen at Savannah NWR, SC, 24–27 Feb (Dennis Forsythe). Only one previous record exists for the state—that of a specimen collected in Spartanburg in 1967.

**Bachman’s Sparrow:** Though a year-round resident in the pine savanna of the coastal plain, this species can be hard to find in winter, when not singing. Individuals were found at Holly Shelter Game Land SP, Pender Co, NC, 14 Dec (Dean Edwards); in Southern Pines, NC, during the CBC, 14 Dec (*vide* Susan Campbell); at Camp Lejeune, NC, during the CBC, 19 Dec (*vide* Chad Garber); and at Webb Wildlife Center, Hampton Co, SC, 15 Feb (Tom Prestby). In the Croatan NF, NC, two were found in the Pringle Rd area, 5 Feb (John Fussell, Jeff Hall) and one was seen there 15 Feb (Fussell, et al.). John Fussell notes that “all birds I saw were associated with wiregrass and were at sites that had been burned within the previous 1 to 1 ½ years.”

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Individuals were found in the “sparrow fields” on the W side of Lake Phelps, NC, 13 Dec (Christian Newton, John Haire); at the same site 5 Feb (Newton); and along Leggett Rd, E of Rocky Mount, NC, where one has been seen for several winters in a row now (Ricky Davis).

**Vesper Sparrow:** Some of the higher CBC totals for this species were eight at Santee NWR, SC, 27 Dec (*vide* Dennis Forsythe); nine in Pinewood, SC, 2 Jan (*vide* Lex Glover); six in Charleston, SC, 4 Jan (*vide* Jeff Mollenhauer); and nine on Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC, 4 Jan (*vide* Juanita Roushdy).

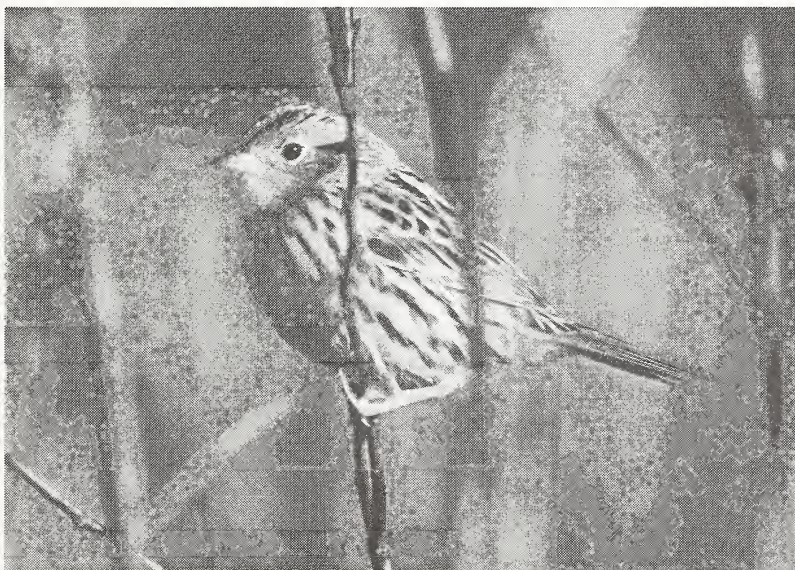


**Lark Sparrow:** This winter's reports were of two between Winnabow and Leland, NC, 16 Dec (John Ennis); an adult near Pettigrew SP, NC, during the CBC, 29 Dec (Ed Corey); one in Wilmington, NC, found on the CBC, 3 Jan (*fide* Sam Cooper); one photographed in Duck, NC, 10 Jan (*fide* Jeff Lewis); and two adults in Nags Head, NC, 6 Feb (David Bridge).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Rarely seen in winter, one was found at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 7 Dec (Jack Fennell, John Voigt) and again at the same site during the Morehead City CBC, 14 Dec (Susan Boyd). Other CBCs found individuals in New Bern, NC, 15 Dec (*fide* Bob Holmes); in Clemson, SC, 20 Dec (*fide* Drew Lanham); and at Santee NWR, SC, 27 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe).

**Henslow's Sparrow:** Individuals were flushed at the Savannah River Site, SC, during the CBC, 18 Dec (*fide* Mark Vulkovich); at Santee NWR, SC, during the CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe); and in the Millis Road Savanna, in southern Croatan NF, NC, 15 Feb (John Fussell, et al.). A good count of four was had on the ACE Basin, SC, CBC, 28 Dec (*fide* Pete Laurie).

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** Another hard-to-see sparrow, one was well-photographed in the "sparrow fields" on the W side of Lake Phelps, NC, 13 Dec (Christian Newton) and was seen through 2 Feb (Ricky Davis). CBCs reported one at Santee NWR, 27 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe); two at Pea Island NWR, NC, 28 Dec (*fide* Paul Sykes); one in the ACE Basin, SC, 28 Dec (*fide* Pete Laurie); and one on Litchfield-Pawleys Island, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill). One was well-photographed at the Silver Bluff Audubon Center, SC, 9 Jan (Steve Kilpatrick). A high count of three was made at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 13 Jan (Steve Calver).



Le Conte's Sparrow, 13 Dec 2008, Lake Phelps, NC. Photo by Christian Newton

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** CBCs reported one in Morehead City, NC, 14 Dec (Ricky Davis); one at Alligator River NWR, NC, 30 Dec (Davis); two on Litchfield-Pawleys Island, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill); three in the Catawba Valley, NC, 3 Jan (*fide* Dwayne Martin); two in Greenville, NC, 4 Jan (*fide* Veronica Pantelidis); and three on Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC, 4 Jan (*fide* Juanita Roushdy). Other sightings were made of individuals along Leggett Rd, E of Rocky Mount, NC, where one has wintered for several years now, throughout the period (Davis); along Satterwhite Rd, eastern Pitt Co, NC, 6 Dec (Davis); in a clear-cut near Core Creek, NC, at the same spot one was seen last year, 8 Dec (John Fussell) and 12 Dec (Al Gamache); at Holly Shelter Game Land SP, Pender Co, NC, 14 Dec (Dean Edwards); and on the W side of Lake Phelps, NC, 21 Dec (Davis) and again 17 Jan (Christian Newton).

**White-crowned Sparrow:** Some of the higher CBC totals of this uncommon sparrow were 48 in Henderson Co, NC, 4 Jan (*fide* Wayne Forsythe); 26 in Buncombe Co, NC, 14 Dec (*fide* Steve Semanchuk); 20 at Southern Lake Norman, NC, 21 Dec (*fide* Taylor Piephoff); 20 in Alamance Co, NC, 27 Dec (*fide* Harry Shoffner); and 20 at Stone Mountain, NC, 3 Jan (*fide* Guy McGrane).

**Lapland Longspur:** Only one was reported this winter—in a field off Fork Shoals Rd in Townville, SC, 17 Jan (Jeff O'Connell, Anne Baker).

**Snow Bunting:** Few and far between on the Outer Banks of North Carolina this winter were five near Cape Point, Buxton, 11 Dec (Brian Patteson); four on the beach at Pea Island NWR, 9 Jan (Linda Ward); and one at the Wright Brothers Memorial, Kitty Hawk, NC, 25 Jan (Dave Briddon). At the opposite end of the state, two were found on top of Max Patch Bald in western Madison County, NC, 27 Dec (Mike Turner) and were photographed 1 Jan (Harry Sell).

**Blue Grosbeak:** Providing a rare winter record of this species was one, either a female or first-winter bird, seen near the intersection of Gay and Leggett Rd, E of Rocky Mount, NC, 23 Jan (Ricky Davis).

**Painted Bunting:** Some of the higher counts of wintering birds at feeders were “up to five” in Gloucester, NC, throughout the winter (*fide* John Fussell); several in Beaufort, SC, 2 Dec (Buddy Campbell); up to three in Wilmington, NC, 3 Dec through the end of the period (Bruce & Melinda Jones); and two in Beaufort, NC, 7 Dec, with at least one remaining throughout the period (Rich & Susan Boyd). A good count of three was made on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Island CBC, 4 Jan (*fide* Juanita Roushdy). Individuals found on CBCs at Congaree Swamp, SC, CBC, 14 Dec (*fide* John Grego), and in Columbia, SC, 28 Dec (*fide* Caroline Eastman) were farther inland than usual.

**Dickcissel:** Two visited the same feeder in Myrtle Beach, SC—a female, 21 Dec, and another female, presumably a different bird due to its brighter plumage, 2 Jan (Phil & Sharon Turner). Amazingly, this yard has now hosted seven birds since 2000, most of which were seen in winter.





Painted Buntings, 4 Dec 2008, Wilmington, NC. Photo by Bruce Jones

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** One was seen in McClellanville, SC, during the CBC, 18 Dec (*fide* NAS). An immature male was found inside a large flock of blackbirds along US 64, two miles W of Columbia, NC, 1 Jan (Ricky Davis).

**Rusty Blackbird:** Some of the higher counts of this declining species were 319 in Southern Pines, NC, during the CBC, 21 Dec (*fide* Susan Campbell); 525 at Pettigrew SP, NC, during the CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Doug LeQuire); 225 in Wilmington, NC, during the CBC, 3 Jan (*fide* Sam Cooper); a high count of 700–1000 at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville, SC, 15 Jan (Paul Serridge, Patti Newell); 300 at Tanglewood Park, Forsyth Co, NC, in mid-February (John Haire); and 130 in Hardeeville, SC, 14 Feb (Richard & Dorothy Rosche).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** A flock, reported as 50 to 70 birds, was seen and photographed in a cow pasture off McAdam's Rd in Townville, SC, 17 Jan (Jeff O'Connell, Anne Baker) through 22 Jan (Linda Kolb). Eight to ten were seen amongst cowbirds in a cattle feeding lot, during a Carolina Bird Club field trip to the Vernon James Research Center, Roper, NC, 31 Jan (Amy Williamson, et al.) and were seen again 2 Feb (Ricky Davis). Three were seen at Santee NWR, SC, during the CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe).

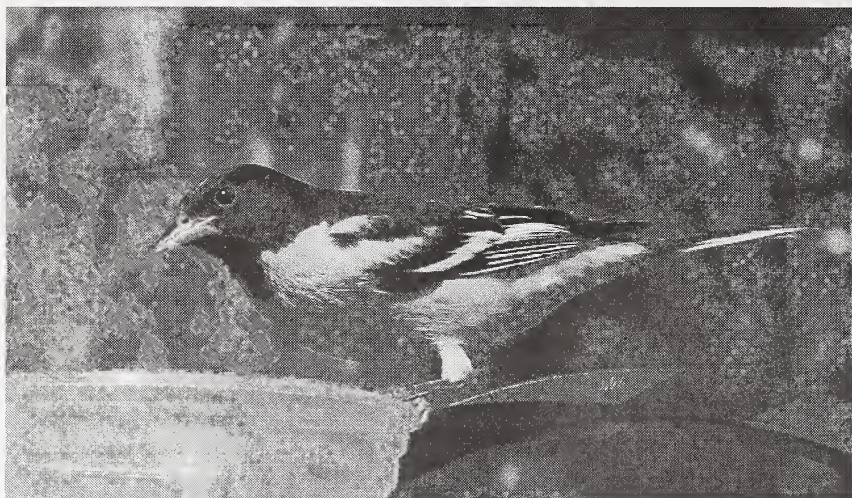
**Bullock's Oriole:** A very rare western vagrant, a male visited a feeder in Stallings, NC, 1 Feb (John Scavetto).

**Baltimore Oriole:** Some of the better counts at feeders were "up to 12" in New Bern, NC, throughout the period (Al Gamache) and "at least 11, including an adult male," in Myrtle Beach, SC, throughout the period (Sharon & Phil Turner)..

**Purple Finch:** Well-reported this winter, some of the better counts were 32 in Spartanburg, SC, during the CBC, 2 Jan (*fide* Lyle Campbell); 58 at



Jordan Lake, NC, during the CBC, 4 Jan (*fide* Norm Budnitz); 45 in Pittsboro, NC, 15 Jan (Phil Warren); and 25 on feeders in Halifax, NC, 28 Feb (Frank Enders).



Baltimore Oriole, 16 Feb 2009, Myrtle Beach, SC. Photo by Phil Turner

**Red Crossbill:** The only one reported this winter was a male on a feeder at Bakers Mountain Park, Catawba Co, NC, 12 Jan (Frank Porch, John Sutton, *fide* Dwayne Martin).

**Pine Siskin:** This winter, this species staged its biggest irruption into the Carolinas in recent memory. Some of the better counts were 150 in Kings Mountain, NC, 16 Dec (Ron Clark); 598 on the CBC at Jordan Lake, NC, 4 Jan (*fide* Norm Budnitz); 349 on the CBC in Henderson Co, NC, 4 Jan (*fide* Wayne Forsythe); 250 at Falls Lake, NC, during the CBC, 5 Jan (*fide* Brian Bockhahn); 150+ around the feeders at Riverbend Park, Conover, NC, 8 Jan (Dwayne Martin); 300 to 400+ around the feeders at Bakers Mountain Park, Catawba Co, NC, 13 Jan (Dwayne Martin); at least 200 at feeders in Coinjock, NC, from mid-January through the end of the period (Linda Ward); and 250 in a yard in Aynor, SC, during the Great Backyard Bird Count in late February (Stephen Thomas).

# CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

The Carolina Bird Club, Inc. is a non-profit educational and ornithological organization founded in 1937. Membership is open to all persons interested in the conservation, natural history, and study of wildlife with particular emphasis on birds. Dues, contributions, and bequests to the Club may be deductible from state and federal income and estate taxes. Dues are payable on an annual basis. Checks should be made payable to Carolina Bird Club, Inc. Checks or correspondence regarding membership or change of address should be sent to the Headquarters Secretary at the address below. Dues include \$4 for a subscription to the *CBC Newsletter* and \$5 for a subscription to *The Chat*. Associate members do not receive a separate subscription.

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# THE CHAT

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## 2009 Spring Migration Counts in North Carolina

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**Marilyn Westphal**

*230 Park Lane, Hendersonville, NC 28791, mjwestph@unca.edu*

Eighteen North Carolina Count areas submitted data for the 2009 spring migration count: five from the mountains, twelve from the piedmont/upper coastal plain, and one from the coast. The Black Mountains count returned after a one-year hiatus as a result of the year-long closure of a section of the Blue Ridge Parkway, and Iredell County and Hanging Rock State Park returned to the count after several years' absence. The count period extended from 25 April through 23 May with the earliest counts occurring in the piedmont and the latest counts in the higher-elevation areas of the mountains.

A total of 400 participants counted 84,469 individuals and 223 species in 1231.90 party-hours, with a total of 70.49 birds per party-hour. Party-hours are determined by adding the total number of birds counted and dividing that number by the total time in the field of all groups or "parties" of participants in the count. "Parties" usually consist of one to five participants. This year there were more North Carolina count areas submitting data than any other year in this decade. Total number of birds per party-hour was slightly lower than average for the decade, and the total number of birds was above average for the decade, but average for the past five years. The addition of the Onslow County count from 2004 to present has greatly increased the total species counted from the first half of the decade relative to the second half because there had been no counts from the coast in the first half of the decade. Because of the extremely diverse habitat in the state, it is important that all areas are covered for the data to be truly representative of North Carolina. There is still a need for additional balance from the coast and some other areas of the state.

Of the species counted, 22% were found in only one count area, but only 8% of the species counted were reported from all count areas. The most common and widespread species on the count were Common Grackle (4653), Northern Cardinal (3662), and American Robin (2900), although there were no Northern Cardinals on the Black Mountains count and no Common Grackles on the Hanging Rock count and the two higher-elevation counts from the mountains (Balsam and Black Mountains). Of the 22% found only in one count area, six were from mountain counts, thirteen were from the piedmont or coastal plain counts, and thirty-one were from the coastal count. Species exclusive to one count are listed in the count details section. Some of the more unusual exclusives included a Lawrence's Warbler (the backcrossed Golden-winged x Blue-winged Warbler hybrid) found on the Chapel Hill count, a pair of Red-throated Loons and a Glossy Ibis on the Kerr Lake count, and a Nashville Warbler on the Falls Lake count. The Pine Siskin winter irruption continued into early spring, with Pine Siskins found on twelve of the eighteen counts.



There has been much discussion lately regarding the expansion of the Fish Crow into the piedmont. In 2009 Fish Crows were found on all spring counts except Hanging Rock SP and the mountain counts. This has generally been the case for the last decade. Comparing four piedmont counts that have consistently been conducted since the 1960s, Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Winston-Salem, and Greensboro, only the Raleigh count has consistently found Fish Crows over that period. Fish Crows were first found on the Raleigh count in 1964 and have been found there almost every year since. In fact, numbers were often greater in the 1990s than in the current decade. They appeared on the Chapel Hill count sporadically and in low numbers in the 1980s, but have regularly been found there since then with numbers generally increasing in the current decade. Fish Crows began appearing on the Greensboro count in the late 1980s and numbers there have also increased in the current decade. The Winston-Salem count shows Fish Crows first appearing in the 1990s, and they have appeared consistently in the current decade. Based on the spring count data, it does appear that the species is gradually expanding its range farther inland.

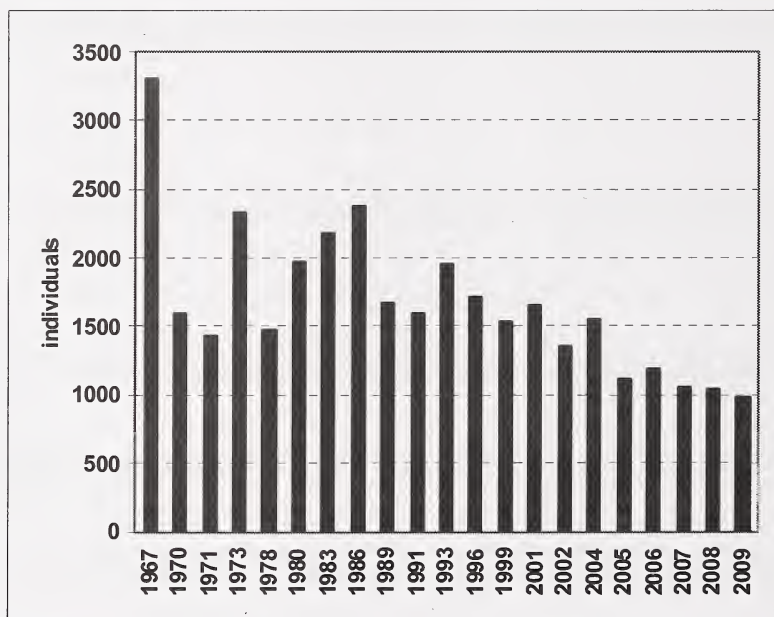


Figure 1. Total Common Grackles in the Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem spring counts during randomly selected years with available data from 1967 through 2009.

Although the Common Grackle is still one of the most common and widespread species found in North Carolina, there has been some speculation that numbers are declining. Using the same four counts and random selected years from the past four decades where data were available (these counts

have always also had good participation), it does appear that Common Grackle numbers are declining (Fig. 1). The decline is evident on each of these individual counts as well. Whether they are declining in all areas of North Carolina is more difficult to determine from spring counts because there are far fewer areas that have reported consistently over many years.

Details of individual counts including names of compilers and participants, and count highlights, follows:

## **Count Area Details**

### ***Mountains***

**Transylvania County—count date 2 May, 109 species, 2565 individuals, 17 participants, 42.00 party-hours.**

Weather: overcast with light rain

Compiler: Norma Siebenheller (sieb@citcom.net)

Participants: Marvin and Michele Barg, Kathy Bartt, Dorothy Bauer, Dick Blee, Pat Bohan, Jeanne Grimmenga, Mike Judd, Ruth Klock, Jenny Lellinger, Pam McFarland, Carolyn and Rick Mills, Eleanor Mockridge, Bill Moore, Carolyn Powell, Norma and Bill Siebenheller, Bill and Shirl Thomas, Charlie and Linda Threatte, Noel Thurner, Connie Updike, Sam Woodruff, Camille Ziegler

Exclusives: none

Notes: Our total of 109 species for this count is smaller than our general average of 112 and far below the highs of 120 and 123 achieved in the past. Nevertheless, we are satisfied that we did as well as we could, given that many of our experienced birders were not participating this year due to various factors, and a number of those who did take part were covering territories they had not done before. Overcast skies and some rainstorms (especially along the Parkway) kept bird activity down, and seemed to inhibit raptor flight as well as birdsong. We had to work hard for what we got! A nice surprise was the small influx of Red Crossbills, which have been seen at area feeders recently; four were counted at three different (and widely-spaced) locations. We had never had this species on our count before. Major disappointments included our failure to find even one chat, American Kestrel, screech-owl, or Wood Duck.

Norma Siebenheller

**Great Balsam and Plott Balsam Mountains IBA—count date 16 May, 85 species, 3279 individuals, 17 participants in 8 parties, 72.75 party-hours.**

Weather: Mostly sunny and warm until late in the afternoon

Compiler: Marilyn Westphal (mjwestph@unca.edu)

Participants: Chris Bogardus, Nancy Casey, Jack Drost, Tom Flagg, Gail and Herman Lankford, Bob Olthoff, Len Pardue, Martha Patterson, Catherine Reid, Ray Sharpton, Andy Shaw, Tom Tribble, Lou Weber, Marilyn Westphal, Connie and Stan Wulkowicz

Exclusives: Peregrine Falcon, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Alder Flycatcher, Black-capped Chickadee

Notes: It isn't really a surprise when the weather forecast is all wrong, but when it was wrong on Saturday, 16 May it made all of the 17 Balsam Mountain spring count participants very happy. Although it started out cloudy and foggy in places early in the morning, by later in the morning there were periods of sunshine and very little wind, which made for great birding weather. Amazingly, the forecasted rain didn't move in until after 7 PM.

The Balsam Mountains Important Bird Area spring count follows the Blue Ridge Parkway roughly from Mt. Pisgah to the Great Smoky Mountains. This largely ribbon-shaped count bulges in the middle like a snake that just had a big meal where it includes the Shining Rock and Middle Prong Wilderness Areas. The bulk of the count area is above 4500 feet in elevation, thus high elevation species prevail. The count area includes deciduous and coniferous forest and extensive mountain balds. All the open areas along the roads and balds are perfect habitat for the perpetually second-most-common species on the count, the Chestnut-sided Warbler. This year there were 348 Chestnut-sided Warblers counted, second only to the perpetual most-common species, the Dark-eyed Junco (366). Rounding out the top ten were: Eastern Towhee (313), American Robin (215), Blue-headed Vireo (169), Black-throated Green Warbler (150), Ovenbird (124), Veery (118), Black-throated Blue Warbler (111), and Canada Warbler (97).

Dropping to 11th place from its former spot much higher on the list was Golden-crowned Kinglet (95). The decrease in kinglets and the continued increase in Chestnut-sided Warblers and Eastern Towhees makes one wonder if it is perhaps the kinglet that is suffering most from the loss of the hemlocks from Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (total kinglet count down by over 40% since the first count in 2006). Chestnut-sided Warblers and Eastern Towhees may be the greatest beneficiaries from the openings created in the forest by the loss of the hemlocks (up by 12 and 26% respectively). More data from the years prior to the loss of the hemlocks are really necessary for more significant conclusions.

Other highlights of the count include a flyover Bald Eagle seen by Tom Tribble and Nancy Casey. Evidently this isn't as unusual as we might think since Bald Eagles have been seen on half of the Balsam and Black Mountains spring counts. Nevertheless, it is always spectacular and unexpected to see an eagle flying over the mountains. The most common raptor on the count was Turkey Vulture (23), followed by Broad-winged Hawk (16). The two Peregrine Falcons at Devil's Courthouse were only present for a short time very early in the morning and never at the nest site. It seems likely that the nest failed again this year.

It was a good year for Least (16) and Alder (14) Flycatchers. All of the Alder Flycatchers were found in the Shining Rock Wilderness. The Least Flycatchers were found in the Shining Rock Wilderness and at select locations west of Richland Balsam to the Smokies. As always, the Black-



capped Chickadee song was by far the dominant chickadee tune in the area between Graveyard Fields and Richland Balsam, and was also being sung at other locations farther west. Between Devil's Courthouse and Richland Balsam it was the only chickadee song being sung.

Gail and Herman Lankford and Len Pardue had a nice surprise of four colorful Bay-breasted Warblers migrating through the area in the easternmost section of the count. Another surprise on the count was five Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, three of them at locations where they had not been seen before on this count. Another unexpected bird was a Cerulean Warbler found by Tom Flagg and Martha Patterson in the Balsam Gap section of the count.

Marilyn Westphal

**Henderson County—count date 9 May, 108 species, 2095 individuals, 9 participants, 30.95 party-hours.**

Compiler: Jim Neal (jlbjneal@gmail.com)

Participants: Jack Drost, Robert Emmott, Richard Leppingwell, Mike McCurdy, Nora Murdock, Barbara Neal, Jim Neal, Pat Robinson, Simon Thompson, Marilyn Westphal

Exclusives: Willow Flycatcher, Sedge Wren

Notes: Saturday, May 9, 2009 was Spring Migration Count day in Henderson County, NC. Ten people worked eight areas in the county and found 108 species and 2095 total birds. The total of 108 species is the third-lowest of our 12 years of data, with the lowest being 103 species in 2001 and highest being 120 species in 2006. The 2095 total birds are the second-lowest ever. The lowest total birds was 2015 in 1999 when we had 14 people covering eight areas, and the highest was 3705 in 2002 when we had 18 people covering 10 areas. The 10 participants is the fewest in our 12 years and may have contributed to fewer species and birds being seen, as most groups had to do multiple areas resulting in several areas being covered in the afternoon when birds are not as active.

We found a Ruffed Grouse, Barred Owl, Common Nighthawk, Common Raven, Canada Warbler, White-crowned Sparrow and two Sedge Wrens that are among those that are difficult to find and are not found every year. This year there were only four species with more than 100 individuals seen. The Barn Swallow was tops at 148, followed by the Cedar Waxwing (124), Canada Goose (104), and European Starling (102). The Northern Cardinal and Song Sparrow were next at 81 and 80 respectively. Twenty species of warblers were seen, with the Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Northern Parula, Black-and-white, and Blackpoll being the most plentiful. We missed a few birds that had been found on one or more previous counts, but overall it was a job well done! I want to thank all those who participated.

**Buncombe County—count date 3 May, 116 species, 5397 individuals, 27 participants in 7 parties, 77.25 party-hours.**

Weather: Warm, 55–75°F, mostly cloudy, intermittent rain throughout the day

Compiler: Marilyn Westphal (mjwestph@unca.edu)

Participants: Katherine Caldwell, Nancy Casey, Peggy Franklin, Charlotte Goedsche, Jamie Harrelson, Katie Hicks, Gail and Herman Lankford, Alex Levine, Nora Murdock, Naomi Otterness, Janie Owens, Len and Esther Pardue, Kittie Reynolds, Steve Ritt, Steve Semanchuk, Andy Shaw, Liz Skiles, Jennifer Stanley, Aaron Steed, Simon Thompson, Tom Tribble, Ben Wardwell, Lou Weber, Marilyn Westphal, Ruth Young

Exclusives: none

Notes: The 2009 Buncombe County, North Carolina spring migration count on 3 May was one of the wettest on record with off-and-on showers all day, but that didn't keep the birds or the birders from their tasks. This year produced the highest number of participants (27) and the greatest number of party-hours (77.25) since this count restarted in 2001. Total species count was about average with 116, but it was the second-highest total bird count with 5397 individuals. The 2009 count produced the highest numbers of several species including Wild Turkey (71), Red-bellied Woodpecker (52), Red-eyed Vireo (172), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (68), Chestnut-sided Warbler (42), Black-throated Blue Warbler (84), Yellow-rumped Warbler (68), Palm Warbler (24), Black-and-white Warbler (104), Worm-eating Warbler (20), Ovenbird (142), Hooded Warbler (90), Scarlet Tanager (87), Bobolink (82—including a flock of 75 in the Warren Wilson section of Swannanoa), Pine Siskin (41—a few still lingering siskins at lower elevations, but most were along the Parkway), and Red Crossbill (eight—at low elevation at Beaver Lake in Asheville). Also encouraging were the highest number of Cerulean Warblers since 2002 (16) and the second-highest number of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (43). Some of the higher numbers are probably the result of the slightly earlier date of the count and the warm temperatures and calm winds.

The earlier-than-usual count date, and the continued closure of the Parkway in part of the count area that excluded some higher elevation areas from the count contributed to low numbers of some other species including Eastern Wood-Pewee (12), Acadian Flycatcher (3), and Great Crested Flycatcher (1) (all late arrivers), as well as Red-breasted Nuthatch (5), Brown Creeper (none), Golden-crowned Kinglet (none) (all species common in the spruce/fir zone, which was inaccessible), and Veery (10) and Canada Warbler (48), which are both late arrivers and are more common at higher elevations.

Although the total numbers of most of the wide variety of warblers that breed in the mountains were very good, and the early date of the count produced good numbers of warblers passing through this area that winter on the Atlantic or Gulf coast such as Palm and Yellow-rumped, there were very few other warbler species on the count that winter in the tropics or subtropics and breed farther north. The only exceptions were 11 Blackpoll, 3 Cape May, and 1 Magnolia Warbler. That was quite unusual, and it seems to be the typical pattern this spring.

Marilyn Westphal

**Black Mountains IBA—count date 23 May, 53 species, 1712 individuals, 12 participants in 5 parties 46.50 party-hours.**

Weather: Warm, 50–75°F, mostly cloudy, foggy at the highest elevations  
Compiler: Marilyn Westphal (mjwestph@unca.edu)

Participants: Nancy Casey, Bill Grow, Chris Kelly, Gail and Herman Lankford, Nora Murdock, Kitty and Lee Reynolds, Mark Simpson, Tom Tribble, Marilyn Westphal, Troy Wilson.

Exclusives: none

Notes: The Black Mountains Important Bird Area spring count includes Mount Mitchell State Park and the surrounding area, including 16 miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway, and forest roads down to the Black Mountains Campground. With the exception of the forest roads going down to the campground and the campground area, most of the count is at very high elevation and the habitat is largely spruce/fir and mixed forest. Although there are some open areas along the roads, most of the area is also heavily forested, and although there are many streams, there are no ponds or lakes. Because the habitat is relatively uniform, species diversity is limited, but because it is such a high elevation area many of the breeding species are unique to the mountains in North Carolina and are especially abundant in this area.

The first Black Mountains count was run in 2006 and another was run in 2007, but in 2008 the Blue Ridge Parkway was closed in that area, so there was no count. This year the count was reinstated and was run on 23 May. Since some high elevation species arrive very late the date for the count is selected to ensure all breeding species have returned. Twelve participants logged a total of 45.75 party-hours and counted 53 species. The always abundant Dark-eyed Junco was the most common species (236), followed by Black-throated Green Warbler (181), Golden-crowned Kinglet (164), Red-breasted Nuthatch (106), Blue-headed Vireo (97), Eastern Towhee (76), Winter Wren (75), Canada Warbler (70), Veery (61), Black-throated Blue Warbler (61), Chestnut-sided Warbler (59), and Blackburnian Warbler (53). Other notable numbers were 35 Brown Creepers and 35 Hermit Thrushes.

There was a significant increase in the number of Black-throated Green Warblers and a significant decline in the number of Golden-crowned Kinglets from the previous two counts. The increase and decline are both in real numbers and in individuals per party-hour. The previous high for Black-throated Green Warbler was in 2007 with 2.80 birds per party-hour, and in 2009 the number was 3.96 per party-hour. The previous low for Golden-crowned Kinglet was in 2006 with 6.30 per party-hour, and in 2009 it was 3.58 per party-hour. These two trends were also evident on the Balsam Mountains spring count. One has to wonder if the loss of the hemlocks is a factor, especially in the decline of the Golden-crowned Kinglet. Other longer term surveys could help clarify whether this is a real trend or just a typical population swing. The biggest surprise to me is that the loss of hemlocks, at least thus far, does not seem to have had any negative effect on the Black-



throated Green Warbler population. I guess they are more versatile than I thought.

## ***Piedmont***

**Iredell County—count date 10 May, 101 species, 3158 individuals, 12 participants, 28.50 party-hours.**

Weather: balmy, 60–80°F, partly cloudy

Compiler: Ron Underwood (rongto@earthlink.net)

Participants: Debbie Birnley, Cynthia Dickerson, Bill English, Lois Goforth, Thad Goforth, Jack Greene, Jay Greene, Lee Holifield, Larry Marlin, Janice Powell, Garnet Underwood and Ron Underwood

Exclusives: none

Notes: We enjoyed perfect birding weather during this count; morning temperature was a balmy 60 and by mid afternoon we reached 80 degrees under partly cloudy skies. No measurable wind to interfere with the fully grown tree leaves.

Our count location is centered on the South Yadkin River Bridge crossing at Chipley Ford Road in Northern Iredell County, North Carolina. GPS coordinates N 35.89663 W 80.8997

Birds not previously found on our spring migration count were the Eurasian Collared-Dove and Fish Crow.

Ron Underwood

**Hanging Rock State Park IBA—count date 6 May, 45 species, 146 individuals, 9 participants in 3 parties, 9.00 party-hours.**

Compiler: Phil Dickinson (pdickins@triad.rr.com)

Participants: Tommie Castleman, Howard Coston, Phil Dickinson, Jay and Connie Grundmeyer, Ron Morris, Jeremy Reiskind, and Chuck and Cindy Thompson. Jamie Anderson, park ranger, assisted with organization and found two species outside the visitors center.

Exclusives: none

Notes: Thanks to the nine intrepid Forsyth birders and park ranger Jamie Anderson for joining me on our Hanging Rock Spring Bird Count 6 May 2009. We were not dissuaded by fog or mist, and we ended up with a pretty good count. We did this count for a couple of years, back five or six years ago, and it was nice to restart this event at one of our adopted Important Bird Areas. The count was conducted from 8:30–11:30 AM and covered an estimated 12 miles on foot.

Would you believe that the most common birds seen were warblers? We had 12 different warbler species, including approximately 20 Black-throated Greens. Our group had a beautiful male Blackburnian before we even left the parking lot. In addition, the team of Ron Morris, Howard Coston and Jamie added a Philadelphia Vireo to the Hanging Rock SP Bird List. Howard was extremely happy to add six species to his life list.

Overall we had 45 species, even though we reduced our count to three routes because of the wet conditions. We had most of the woodland birds we would expect to see, but missed those overhead raptors, swifts and swallows because of the fog.

Phil Dickinson

**Forsyth County—count date 2 May, 127 species, 4767 individuals, 34 participants, 67.50 party-hours.**

Weather: 65–75° F, winds WSW 5–10 mph, overcast to partly cloudy

Compiler: John Haire (johnhaire@starpower.net)

Participants: Kay Bergey, Kim Brand, Tommie Castleman, Phil Crisp, Phil Dickinson, David and Susan Disher, Cynthia Donaldson, Gardner and Margaret Gidley, Bill Gifford, John Haire, Sven Halling, Bill and Susan Hammond, Derek Hudgins, Kitty Jensen, Susan Jones, Tom McKay, Terri Maness, Linda Moore, Ron Morris, Ann Newsome, Laura Phail, Paul Powers, Jeremy Reiskind, Shelley Rutkin, Gene Schepker, David Shuford, Bill Sugg, Chuck and Cindy Thompson, Gray Tuttle, Olive Wilbur

Exclusives: Wilson's Warbler

Notes: The number of counters (34) and party hours (67.5) this year were both significantly below the 17-year (1992–2008) averages (48 counters, 104 party hours). Our species count was about average (127 vs. 126), while our individual count was well below average (4767 vs. 5699).

Unusual species found this year included our first record (since 1992) of Pine Siskins (3 birds), second records of Red-breasted Merganser and Wilson's Warbler, third records of Semipalmated Sandpiper and Least Flycatcher, fourth record of Warbling Vireo (2 birds), and fifth record of Greater Yellowlegs (5 birds).

We missed seeing Yellow-breasted Chat on count day for the first time, although we found it during count week. Other species normally seen but missed on count day were Ring-billed Gull, Great Horned Owl, Common Nighthawk and Palm Warbler. We found Chuck-will's-widow on 14 of the last 17 counts but missed it this year, probably due to limited time birding at night and to loss of suitable habitat to suburban sprawl.

We recorded our highest individual counts for five species: Lesser Yellowlegs (25 vs. average of 4), Great Crested Flycatcher (32 vs. 19), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (73 vs. 39), Savannah Sparrow (14 vs. 5), and Grasshopper Sparrow (11 vs. 5; 10 were found at the landfill). Other high individual counts included Double-crested Cormorant (25 vs. average of 11), Great Blue Heron (9 vs. 4) and Cedar Waxwing (505 vs. 212). Cliff Swallows registered a higher-than-average count (69 vs. 29) and appear to have started a new nesting location at Bethabara, away from their traditional locations under the Yadkin River bridges.

We recorded our lowest individual counts for six species: Canada Goose (146 vs. average of 257), Yellow Warbler (2 vs. 16), Scarlet Tanager (10 vs. 29), Song Sparrow (27 vs. 67), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (7 vs. 20) and American Goldfinch (86 vs. 225). Other low individual counts included

Northern Bobwhite (1 vs. average of 6), Spotted Sandpiper (12 vs. 28), Blue Jay (79 vs. 168), Purple Martin (19 vs. 59) and Bobolink (2 vs. 16). Certainly some of these low counts are due at least in part to the below-average number of counters and hours in the field, while others (e.g. Bobwhite, Martin, Bobolink) are probably primarily due to loss of appropriate habitat within our count circle and Forsyth County in general.

John Haire

**Greensboro—count date 2 May, 124 species, 8769 individuals, 32 participants, 143.50 party-hours.**

Weather: Cloudy and overcast all day. Temperature 63–77°F, winds light and variable

Compiler: Herb Hendrickson (hhendrickson@triad.rr.com)

Participants: Carolyn Allen, Bill Beaty, Diane Bowman, Louise Brown, Dennis Burnette, Lynn Burnette, Sue Cole, Scott DePue, Bob Dow, Marie Dow, Judi Durr, Herb Hendrickson, Doug Hill, Craig Lawrence, Jane Lewis, Elizabeth Link, Henry Link, Clarence Mattocks, Gregg Morris, Lynn Moseley, Jean Murdick, Lane Oldham, Deirdre Poe, Wallace Sills, Lou Skrabec, Lauren Spence, Emily Talbert, John Thielen, Emily Tyler, Ann Walter-Fromson, George Wheaton, Melissa Whitmire

Exclusives: none

Notes: NCA and TSU Farms were closed to all visitors on count day because of swine flu precautions. This is thought to have depressed the counts of shorebirds and field birds. The Pine Siskins were reported by four different parties at widely separated locations.

Herb Hendrickson

**Southern Pines—count date 26 April, 133 species, 5239 individuals, 20 participants, 69.30 party-hours.**

Compiler: Susan Campbell (susan@ncaves.com)

Participants: Brady Beck, Carol Bowman, Susan Campbell, Dick and Lois Dole, Dawn and Jeff Fines, Scott Hartley, Tom Howard, Charlie Jones, Linda Jones, Marjorie Ludwig, Thomas McCrimmon, Carolyn McDermott, David McCloy, Michael McCloy, Lowell and Susan Strine, Rosalyn Walk, Cassie Willis

Exclusives: Lesser Scaup, Northern Harrier, Bachman's Sparrow, Lark Sparrow

Notes: The Southern Pines Spring Count experienced good weather and above-average participation. No highly unusual species were found. Migrants were spotty, typical of the Sandhills up to this point of the season. Black-crowned Night-Heron was an unexpected treat. And as has been the case on Ft. Bragg for many years, at least one male Lark Sparrow was found on a territory. Good numbers of Pine Siskins lingered throughout the count area as well as late Ruby-crowned Kinglets and a count week Bufflehead in Whispering Pines.



**Chapel Hill—count date 2 May, 120 species, 9110 individuals, 46 participants, 127.00 party-hours.**

Weather: low 66°F, high 84°F; wind SW 5–15 mph; mostly cloudy, light rain

Compiler: Will Cook (cwcook@duke.edu)

Participants: Sam Baron, Karen and Joe Bearden, Brian Bockhahn, Chris Canfield, Derb Carter, Shawna Catlett, Courtney Clapp, Will Cook, Anson D. Cooke, Anson R. Cooke, David Curtin, Ricky Davis, Denny Dobbin, Tom Driscoll, Colyer Durovich, Kate Finlayson, Maurice Graves, Steven Graves, Perry Haaland, Loren Hintz, Bo Howes, Alan Johnston, Betty King, Alan Kneidel, Sasha Konkel, Mark Kosiewski, Laurie Kucharik, David Murdock, Candace Owens, Hunter Pendleton, Carlos Perera, Carl Rothfels, Dan Runcie, Harriet Sato, Lois and Mike Schultz, Doug Shadwick, David and Judy Smith, Judy Teague, Shelley Theye, Amalie Tuffin, Pam Timmons, Ginger Travis, Carol Williamson. Feeder Watchers: Lew Miles, Caroline and Harry Pederson, Joan Redman, Barbara Roth, Jerrold and Joan Walecka

Exclusives: American Bittern, “Lawrence’s” Warbler

Notes: The Chapel Hill spring count on May 2 was a little dull, below average in both species and total individuals, with 120 species and 9110 individual birds (10-year average 124 species, 11,276 birds). Observer effort was low at 127 party-hours (average 160.8) since several regular counters couldn’t make it this year, but the number of birds per party-hour was normal (72, average 70).

Despite the slow overall count, a few remarkable birds were found, topped by the Lawrence’s Warbler (the rare backcrossed Golden-winged x Blue-winged Warbler hybrid) that Carol Williamson found at Finley Golf Course, near Mason Farm. Not only is this hybrid a first report for the count, but it’s also a first report for Orange County and one that only a few birders in the state have ever seen. Other rarities included an American Bittern (first since 1980) spotted in flight by Derb Carter and Ricky Davis as they were starting their state big day at the edge of the count circle on Dairyland Road, a couple of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons (Mike Schultz, Betty King’s party), a Semipalmated Plover (Brian Bockhahn) at the Farrington Road wastewater plant, a Greater Yellowlegs at the pond at Mason Farm (Will Cook’s party), two White-crowned Sparrows (Will Cook and Carol Williamson) seen out of typical habitat in suburban Chapel Hill, and a good number of lingering Pine Siskins (several observers).

We set just two record highs this year: Bald Eagle and Great Crested Flycatcher. The Bald Eagle count is truly remarkable, with our estimated 54 (23 adults, 31 immatures) doubling the previous high count of 27, set two years before. Ginger Travis, covering the Morgan Creek arm of the lake by canoe, reported seeing 10 immatures circling at one time—they must have had a great nesting season last year! The count of 110 Great Cresteds is just slightly higher than the count of 108 in 2006. They’re been steadily increasing for the past decade, perhaps because they are taking advantage of

suburban bird houses. We also had unusually high numbers of Pine Siskins: 14 is the highest count since 1988.

Low counts were much more numerous. Not unexpectedly, we missed Northern Bobwhite for the fourth year in a row. Before this series of misses, they had been missed only once in the 50+ year history of the count. They definitely seem to be on the way out locally. We set one record low, again not unexpected but continuing a long trend: Field Sparrow (10, previous low 12 in 2004). Other unusually scarce species were Mallard (lowest since 1996), Spotted Sandpiper (1973), Whip-poor-will (1996), Hairy Woodpecker (1996), Northern Flicker (1974), Eastern Kingbird (1997), Eastern Bluebird (1997), Northern Mockingbird (1994), Pine Warbler (1996), and Common Grackle (1974). Grackle numbers have been slowly but steadily declining since their peak in the early 1980s. Team honors: This year Will Cook's party of seven birders, covering Mason Farm Biological Reserve, got the highest species count, with 89, while Tom Driscoll's group of six counted the most individual birds, 1269. Thanks to all of our 46 field counters and 7 feeder watchers!

Charles W. "Will" Cook

**Jordan Lake—count date 3 May, 124 species, 8490 individuals, 49 participants in 25 parties, 141.25 party-hours.**

Weather: Low 63, high 85°F; wind AM calm, PM 10–15 mph, partly cloudy in morning, overcast in afternoon

Compiler: Norm Budnitz (rbudnitz@gmail.com)

Participants: Patsy Bailey, Barbara Beaman, Elizabeth and Todd Bishop, Norm Budnitz, Chris Canfield, Barbara Coffman, Patrick Coin, Will Cook, Anson D. Cooke, Anson R. Cooke, Ricky Davis, Colyer Durovich, Marty Girolami, Perry Haaland, Waltin Haywood, Russell Herman, Carl and Loren Hintz, Bo Howes, Betty King, Chip Konrad, Terry Logue, Jennifer Maher, Phil Manning, Marty McClelland, Melinda Meade, Kyle Mills, Mickey Mills, Ruth Moleski, Robin Moran, Rick Payne, Barbara Roth, Lois and Mike Schultz, Josh Southern, Sterling Southern, Brian Strong, Judy Teague, Pam Timmons, Ginger Travis, Andy Upshaw, David and Millicent VanNess, Margaret Vimmerstedt, Phil Warren, Carol Williamson, Rouse Wilson

Exclusives: Bank Swallow

Notes: May 3, 2009, was a very pleasant spring day. The temperature ranged from 63 to 85°F, the skies were clear to partly cloudy with no precipitation, and the wind was calm in the morning to 10–15 mph in the afternoon.

Forty-nine observers (10-year average: 51) in 24 parties (10-year average: 23) tallied 8490 individual birds (avg. 8664), 124 species (avg. 125), during 141 party-hours in the field (avg. 146).

Perhaps the most unusual species (for our count) was a Warbling Vireo seen by Ricky Davis on the west side of the Haw River where it goes under the US 64 bridge. This species has only been recorded on our count once before in 1990! Ricky happened to be birding in the count circle, happened

to run into Mike and Lois Schultz at Ebenezer, and so sent me his sightings. Good thing, too, because he also found 4 Least Sandpipers, a Gray-cheeked Thrush, and a lingering Bonaparte's Gull (Will Cook also found one).

Perhaps the most unusual individual bird was a leucistic female Blue Grosbeak found by Barbara Coffman, Kyle Mills, and Mickey Mills. Here is Barbara's description of what they saw:

We found [a leucistic] female blue grosbeak on Horton's Pond Road during the Jordan Lake bird count on Sunday. She was almost entirely white, with some dark streaking on the wings, but the male was with her and she was flying back and forth from a nest disposing of fecal sacs. It was very cool! They were by the first pond on the right on Horton's pond road coming from 1008, just past the first houses. There is a hillside of cultivated shrubs which they were feeding in and using as perches. The nest seemed to be in the woods to the left of the shrub garden. It will be interesting to see if the female shows up again next year.

Other nice finds for the count: Andy Upshaw and Rouse Wilson found a Cape May Warbler, last seen on our count in 1995. Mike and Lois Schultz found a Laughing Gull and a Caspian Tern. And Carol Williamson and Norm Budnitz found a Loggerhead Shrike.

It always amazes me that even after three decades, we still generate record high counts for a few species every year. This year we found 19 Wild Turkeys (previous high was nine in 2005), 225 Turkey Vultures (210 in 2002), 30 Red-headed Woodpeckers (25 in 2008, 2002, and 1999), and 48 Prothonotary Warblers (45 in 1980). Will Cook found 10 American Coots (7 in 2008) on Harris Lake. Large numbers of Coots spend the winter on the warm waters of the lake, and it seems that a few are lingering into the spring these days. Will they begin to breed?

As usual, some species that used to be more common continue to be seen in very low numbers: one Northern Bobwhite, one Loggerhead Shrike, and 20 Field Sparrows. The count of 37 Eastern Meadowlarks is above our 10-year average of 35, but is still a lot lower than the 100+ we used to find 10–20 years ago. No one found a Kestrel this year, and no one heard a Great Horned Owl. (Hint, hint: We need more nocturnal birding time.)

Ricky Davis saw 93 species within the count circle, but he wasn't constrained within a particular area and was able to visit more different habitats. So our fabulous no-prize goes to Phil Warren who tallied 87 species in his area. Thanks for counting.

Norm Budnitz

**Durham—count date 26 April, 119 species, 6679 individuals, 19 participants in 12 parties, 73.55 party-hours.**

Compiler: Mike Schultz (ross.gull@verizon.net)

Participants: Brian Bockhahn, Will Cook, Tom Driscoll, Colyer Durovich, Julia Gruber, Robert Howes, Aaron Jenkins, Tom Krakauer, Brian Murphy, Kim Novick, Cameron Panee, Jeff Pippen, Nina Pluskowski, Lois Schultz, Michael Schultz, Deck Stapleton, Edith Tatum, Judy Teague, Amalie Tuffin

Exclusives: Blue-winged Warbler



Notes: none

Mike Schultz

**Wake County—count date 9 May, 114 species, 3065 individuals, 27 participants in 11 parties, 49.00 party-hours.**

Weather: Temperature 65–90°F, wind 5–10 mph, partly cloudy skies

Compiler: John Connors (John.Connors@ncmail.net)

Participants: Jared Barnes, Joe Bearden, Karen Bearden, Pat Bost, Jerome Brewster, Halbert Carmichael, John Connors, David Cooper, Ed Corey, John Dole, Jaap Folmer, David Gaine, Diane Hardy, Anne Hicks, Mark Johns, Will Kimler, Karen Krough, John Little, Gerry Luginbuhl, Jim Luginbuhl, Jim Mulholland, Mike Pollard, Steve Shultz, Erik Thomas, Abby Venartelli, Mary Waller, and Kari Wouk

Exclusives: none

Notes: Species numbers were lowest in recent years. Some interesting observations include: Common Loon (1) flyover at Yates Mill Pond; Great Egret (1) at Lake Wheeler; Lesser Yellowlegs (1) at NCSU Dairy Ponds; Northern Bobwhite (1) was at Mid-Pines, the first in a few years; Black-billed Cuckoo (1) at Mid-Pines was an unusual find; Common Nighthawk (3) returned over downtown Raleigh; many Swainson's Thrushes (12) at numerous sites, Veery (1); Philadelphia Vireo (1) heard at Swift Creek; 19 species of warblers including: Yellow (1), Chestnut-sided (2), Magnolia (5), Black-throated Blue (31), Black-throated Green (1), Palm (1), Blackpoll (5), Black-and-white (5), American Redstart (10), Worm-eating (1), and Northern Waterthrush (1). The grasslands/farms were lacking in birds this spring despite unharvested sections of wheat and alfalfa at Mid-Pines. Savannah Sparrow (2) and Grasshopper Sparrow (1) were found, but Field Sparrow (2) remained rare; Bobolink (2) were flyovers at Mid-Pines.

Significant misses include: Mute Swan (no one was able to scout Cary), Hooded Mergansers were not found at Yates Mill Pond; Loggerhead Shrikes were not found at any of the traditional locations; Prairie Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Chat were not recorded. Falls Lake could not be counted this year, which reduced our records of species and numbers from recent years.

Cliff Swallows continue nesting in northern Wake County along Neuse River bridges and now appear to have colonized bridges adjacent to Anderson Point.

Great Blue Heron colonies seem to be thriving, though no active colonies are easily visible along count routes.

The Purple Martin colony at University Club is near capacity; the Prairie Ridge colony continues to struggle (1 nest), while that at the NC Museum of Art is empty. The Anderson Point colony has not re-established.

Meadow habitat at Prairie Ridge and Anderson Point continues to progress; Field Sparrows have begun using both sites, and Eastern Meadowlarks are well established at Prairie Ridge.

Wake Audubon placed a number of Prothonotary Warbler boxes in habitat last spring at count sites; no definitive records yet, but Prothonotaries appear to be breeding at Anderson Point.

John Connors

**Falls Lake—count date 28 April, 110 species, 3923 individuals, 19 participants in 11 parties, 65.85 party-hours.**

Weather: Sunny and warm, 58–81 degrees

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (cbockhahn4@earthlink.net)

Participants: Herb and Pat Amyx, Karen Berry, Brian Bockhahn, John Connors, Ed Corey, Amin Davis, Matthew Daw, Becky Holmes, Deborah Robertson, Harry and Sandra Shoffner, Jeri Smart, Clyde Smith, Josh Southern, Sterling Southern, Deck Stapleton, Brian Strong, Sue Wilson

Exclusives: Nashville Warbler

Notes: The sixth Falls Lake Spring Bird Count was held on April 28, 2009 under sunny skies and warm temperatures. We tied our highest total of 19 observers, and found 3923 birds and 110 species, just over our six-year averages for each.

First count records: A Nashville Warbler, both seen and heard, was a pleasant surprise at Sandling Beach above the new wildlife overlook.

Third count records: Loggerhead Shrike at Camp Kanata area, Veery at Blue Jay Point, both Northern Waterthrush and Kentucky Warbler along Lick Creek, Savannah Sparrow at three different sites, and Pine Siskin reported at two different sites after a great winter irruption.

Misses: Our only A-list miss was Song Sparrow. B-list misses included Broad-winged Hawk, Bonaparte's Gull, and American Redstart.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count.

Brian Bockhahn

**Kerr Lake—count date 29 April, 121 species, 4268 individuals, 15 participants in 9 parties, 67.50 party-hours.**

Weather: mostly sunny and warm, low 55, high 75

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (cbockhahn4@earthlink.net)

Participants: Brian Bockhahn, Adam D'Onofrio, Bryce and Lori Fleming, Joe Foster, Paul Glass, Jerry Klingenberg, Fred Lobdell, Grace McCrowell, Paul Scharf, Harry and Sandra Shoffner, Tina Trice, Clyde Smith, and Deck Stapleton

Exclusives: Ring-necked Duck, Red-throated Loon, Glossy Ibis

Notes: The sixth Kerr Lake Spring Bird Count was held on 29 April 2009 under mostly sunny skies and warm temperatures, 55–75°F. We had a record-high 15 participants finding 121 species and 4268 individuals.

New to spring checklist: A lone Ring-necked Duck at Dick Cross WMA, and at North Bend Park a pair of Red-throated Loons, a single Glossy Ibis flying over the dam heading downstream, and a singing Cerulean Warbler.

Second records: A flock of Red-breasted Mergansers off Kimball Point, same area as in 2008; a single Great Egret flying downstream over the dam; three American Coots at Dick Cross, and one loner above the dam; Bobolink

at Henderson Point area 10; a running total of four Pine Siskins at North Bend Park and the Tailrace/Liberty Hill trail.

Third records: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Eagle Point for the second year in a row; single Green Herons at three different areas; Lesser Yellowlegs at Henderson Point and Greater Yellowlegs at Dick Cross WMA; singing Chestnut-sided Warbler near North Bend Park; and Worm-eating Warbler on Buggs Island below the dam.

Misses: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, and Louisiana Waterthrush.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

**Raven Rock State Park—count date 25 April, 118 species, 5921 individuals, 13 participants, 55.00 party-hours.**

Weather: Temperature 65–90°F; Wind west, 0–10 mph; Water open A.M. Sunny; P.M. Sunny.

Count circle center at junction of NC 210 and SR 1434.

Compiler: Erik R. Thomas (ethomas@social.chass.ncsu.edu)

Participants: Laura Bauman, David Brown, Michael Deldo, David DuMond, Matt Gambel, Paul Hart, Scott Hartley, Tom Howard, Bobby Lutfy, Amy Sario, Erik Thomas, Amber Williams.

Exclusives: none

Notes: none

**Coast**

**Onslow County—count date 9 May, 143 species, 5886 individuals, 23 participants in 11 parties, 65.50 party-hours.**

Weather: Temperature 69–89° F, skies were clear to partly cloudy with no precipitation, and the wind was southwest at 5–10 mph increasing to 10–15 mph after 9:00 AM with gusts to 28 mph.

Compiler: Andy Webb (jwebb3@ec.rr.com)

Participants: Rich and Susan Boyd, Donna Flaherty, John Fussell, Al Gamache, Buddy Garrett, Chad Garber, Gilbert S. Grant, Martin Korenek, Kira Newcomb, Lindsey Moss, Jim and Laura O'Donnell Sr., Kacy Ray, Mark Shields, Dr. Cameron Smith, Bruce Smithson, Craig Tenbrink, Kelly Trigle, Tim Trott, Andy Webb, Amy Williamson, and Kelly Zivicki

Exclusives: Northern Gannet, Brown Pelican, Great Cormorant, Least Bittern, Snowy Egret, Tricolored Heron, White Ibis, Mississippi Kite, Clapper Rail, Common Moorhen, Black-bellied Plover, Wilson's Plover, Piping Plover, American Oystercatcher, Willet, Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, Common Tern, Forster's Tern, Least Tern, Black Skimmer, Painted Bunting, Boat-tailed Grackle



Notes: 9 May 2009 was a very pleasant spring day. The temperature ranged from 69 to 89°F, well above our average of 55 to 77°F, the skies were clear to partly cloudy with no precipitation, and the wind was southwest at 5 to 10 mph increasing to 10–15 mph after 9:00 AM with gusts to 28 mph.

Twenty-three observers in 11 parties tallied 5886 individual birds (10 year avg. 6972) and 143 species (10 year avg. 152) during 65.5 party hours in the field.

Perhaps the most unusual individual birds were two Cape May Warblers found by Bruce Smithson and Amy Williamson. These birds were heard only, but responded to a tape played to verify the identification: It has been 11 years since a Cape May Warbler has been reported on this count, and it is only the second report.

Other nice finds for the count: Pectoral Sandpiper was found by Gilbert Grant and Mark Shields—it has been 9 years since this species was recorded; 17 Cliff Swallows were reported by Buddy Garrett nesting on the two downtown Jacksonville bridges; a Mississippi Kite was found by Andy Webb and Donna Flaherty, only the third report for this species; and American Kestrel found by Kelly Tingle, Lindsey Moss and Kelly Zivicki on the Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, only the second sighting for this species.

There were several high counts generated this year. This year we found 20 Wild Turkeys (previous high was 18 in 2005 and 2007), 170 Black-bellied Plovers (98 in 2007), 19 Wilson Plovers (12 in 2003), 210 Least Terns (202 in 2006), 4 Great Horned Owls (3 in 2008), 17 Cliff Swallows (2 in 1999), and 134 Northern Mockingbirds (104 in 2004).

There were also several low counts and misses. Our low counts included: three Yellow-throated Vireos and 11 Red-eyed Vireos, three Hooded Warblers, 17 Chipping Sparrows, 18 Least Sandpipers, 105 Laughing Gulls, and 54 Ring-billed Gulls. Our misses included: Bachman's Sparrow (our first miss in 11 years), Louisiana Waterthrush, Common Loon (first miss in 11 years), Little Blue Heron (first miss in 11 years), Red Knot (for the second year in a row), and Common Nighthawk (fourth year in a row). Most of our misses were species that we usually manage to get in very low numbers.

Thanks for counting.

Andy Webb

Table 1. 2009 spring counts in North Carolina

Species	Trans	Bals	Hend	Bunc	BIMt	Ired	Hang	Fors	Gbro	SoPi	ChHi	Jord	Durh	Wake	Falls	Kerr	RaRo	Onsl	total	mntns	pied	coast
Canada Goose	86		104	121	5/23	5/10	5/6	5/2	5/2	4/26	5/2	5/3	4/26	5/9	4/28	4/29	4/25	5/9	2421	1.15	2.25	1.44
Mute Swan									596	149	242	97	234	218	95	128	68	94	5	0.00	0.01	0.00
Wood Duck			7	22		2		11	71	7	62	33	32	6	21	29	25	23	351	0.11	0.33	0.35
American Black Duck								2					2					9	13	0.00	0.00	0.14
Mallard	11		17	111		12		132	109	67	50	40	10	82	29	3	8	30	711	0.52	0.60	0.46
Blue-winged Teal								cw												0.00	0.00	0.00
Ring-necked Duck																3			3	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lesser Scaup										2									2	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hooded Merganser									7				3				1		11	0.00	0.01	0.00
Red-breasted Merganser								1								9		6	16	0.00	0.01	0.09
Ruddy Duck									1									39	40	0.00	0.00	0.60
Duck sp.												1							1	0.00	0.00	0.00
Northern Bobwhite						1		1	1	6		1		1			3	23	40	0.01	0.02	0.35
Ruffed Grouse		7	1	2	4														14	0.05	0.00	0.00
Wild Turkey	7	4	2	71	1	3	1	1	4	1	1	19	10		5	11	5	20	166	0.32	0.07	0.31
Red-throated Loon									cw							2			2	0.00	0.00	0.00
Common Loon									cw	1				1		18			20	0.00	0.02	0.00
Pied-billed Grebe													1			3		1	6	0.00	0.00	0.02
Horned Grebe																				0.00	0.00	0.00
Northern Gannet									cw									11	11	0.00	0.00	0.17
Brown Pelican	1																	50	50	0.00	0.00	0.76

Species	Trans	Bals	Hend	Bunc	BlMt	Ired	Hang	Fors	Gbro	SoPi	ChHi	Jord	Durh	Wake	Falls	Kerr	RaRo	Onsl	total	mtns	pied	coast
Double-crested Cormorant	5							25	72	4	172	295	355	15	117	275	4	95	1434	0.02	1.49	1.45
Great Cormorant											1							2	2	0.00	0.00	0.03
American Bittern																		1	1	0.00	0.00	0.00
Least Bittern																		1	1	0.00	0.00	0.02
Great Blue Heron	13		4	1		4		9	104	19	190	185	61	26	51	45	10	8	730	0.07	0.78	0.12
Great Egret	2	1	1						4	2			1	1		1	6	34	52	0.01	0.02	0.52
Snowy Egret																		8	8	0.00	0.00	0.12
Tricolored Heron																		14	14	0.00	0.00	0.21
Cattle Egret																	2	10	12	0.00	0.00	0.15
Green Heron	3		4	7				8	11	11	10	8	8	11		3	6	17	109	0.05	0.09	0.26
Black-crowned Night-Heron										1			1					2	2	0.00	0.00	0.00
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron								6	3		2								11	0.00	0.01	0.00
White Ibis																		2	2	0.00	0.00	0.03
Glossy Ibis																		1	1	0.00	0.00	0.00
Black Vulture	2		6	5				11	24	2	52	44	16	1	26	74	8	2	278	0.05	0.29	0.03
Turkey Vulture	39		10	54				57	64	51	130	225	63	38	68	93	70	98	1103	0.47	0.98	1.50
Osprey		1		3				6	6	2	12	45	8	2	26	19	1	41	172	0.01	0.14	0.63
Mississippi Kite									cw									1	1	0.00	0.00	0.02
Bald Eagle		1							5	1	54	23	5	4	16	7		1	117	0.00	0.13	0.02
Northern Harrier									cw	1								1	1	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1				1			1	1		2			1		2		9	0.00	0.01	0.00
Cooper's Hawk	1			3		2		6	3	4	4	4		2	2		4	1	36	0.01	0.03	0.02
Accipiter sp.									1			2							3	0.00	0.00	0.00
Red-shouldered Hawk		1		1		9		5	17	16	19	28	13	14	7	7	15	10	162	0.01	0.17	0.15



Species	Trans	Bals	Hend	Bunc	BlMt	Ired	Hang	Fors	Gbro	SoPi	ChHi	Jord	Durh	Wake	Falls	Kerr	RaRo	Onsl	total	mnts	pied	coast
Broad-winged Hawk		16	1	8	4	1		2	1	3	4	3					1	2	46	0.11	0.02	0.03
Red-tailed Hawk	5	5	5	4		7		13	24	5	21	21	14	14	7	13	11	6	175	0.07	0.17	0.09
Buteo sp.												1							1	0.00	0.00	0.00
American Kestrel								1	3	2			1	1			1	1	10	0.00	0.01	0.02
Peregrine Falcon		2																9	2	0.01	0.00	0.00
Clapper Rail																		9	9	0.00	0.00	0.14
Common Moorhen																		2	2	0.00	0.00	0.03
American Coot	2			1					1	1		10				4		2	19	0.01	0.02	0.00
Black-bellied Plover																		170	170	0.00	0.00	2.60
Wilson's Plover																		19	19	0.00	0.00	0.29
Semipalmated Plover											1							271	272	0.00	0.00	4.14
Piping Plover																		1	1	0.00	0.00	0.02
Killdeer	2		10	8		30		30	27	42	36	38	21	9	19	53	64	66	455	0.07	0.41	1.01
American Oystercatcher																		22	22	0.00	0.00	0.34
Spotted Sandpiper	2		7	12		4		12	5	6	2	16	7	18	4	4		20	119	0.08	0.09	0.31
Solitary Sandpiper	2		7	4		3		55	17	2	13	13	18	6	3		2	12	145	0.05	0.15	0.00
Greater Yellowlegs								5	4		1					1		63	23	0.00	0.01	0.18
Willet																		12	63	0.00	0.00	0.96
Lesser Yellowlegs			2					25					1	1		1		5	35	0.01	0.03	0.08
Yellowlegs sp																	1	1	1	0.00	0.00	0.00
Whimbrel																		20	20	0.00	0.00	0.31
Ruddy Turnstone																		19	19	0.00	0.00	0.29
Sanderling																		257	257	0.00	0.00	3.92
Semipalmated Sandpiper								1										76	77	0.00	0.00	1.16
Least Sandpiper			24					19	1	1	3	4					10	18	80	0.09	0.04	0.27
peep sp.																		36	36	0.00	0.00	0.55

Species	Trans	Bals	Hend	Bunc	BLMt	Ired	Hang	Fors	Gbro	SoPi	ChHi	Jord	Durh	Wake	Falls	Kerr	RaRo	Onsl	total	mntns	pied	coast
Pectoral Sandpiper																		1	1	0.00	0.00	0.02
Dunlin																		300	300	0.00	0.00	4.58
Short-billed Dowitcher																		275	275	0.00	0.00	4.20
Wilson's Snipe								2	cw	2			3						7	0.00	0.01	0.00
American Woodcock										1			1					1	5	0.01	0.00	0.02
Bonaparte's Gull												2				2		1	5	0.00	0.00	0.02
Laughing Gull												1			5			106	112	0.00	0.01	1.62
Ring-billed Gull								cw	100	3	42	145	11	1	29	89		54	474	0.00	0.47	0.82
Herring Gull																		35	35	0.00	0.00	0.53
Great Black-backed Gull																		1	1	0.00	0.00	0.02
Least Tern																		210	210	0.00	0.00	3.21
Caspian Tern									cw			1				3		1	6	0.00	0.01	0.02
Common Tern																		17	17	0.00	0.00	0.26
Forster's Tern																		30	30	0.00	0.00	0.46
Royal Tern																		25	25	0.00	0.00	0.38
Sandwich Tern																		4	4	0.00	0.00	0.06
Black Skimmer																		10	10	0.00	0.00	0.15
Rock Pigeon																		66	370	0.04	0.33	1.01
Eurasian Collared-Dove																		4	9	0.00	0.00	0.06
Mourning Dove	81	19	58	129	6	200	2	162	235	187	247	222	140	103	116	96	129	262	2394	1.09	2.05	4.00
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1	2	2			2		3	1	3	8	20	26	5	3	5	4	1	86	0.02	0.09	0.02
Black-billed Cuckoo														1					3	0.01	0.00	0.00
Eastern Screech-Owl																		4	17	0.00	0.01	0.06
Great Horned Owl																		4	18	0.00	0.01	0.06
Barred Owl																		3	84	0.03	0.08	0.05
Northern Saw-whet Owl																			1	0.00	0.00	0.00



Species	Trans	Bals	Hend	Bunc	BlMt	Ired	Hang	Fors	Gbro	SoPi	ChHi	Jord	Durh	Wake	Falls	Kerr	RaRo	Onsl	total	mnts	pied	coast
Common Nighthawk			1	1					6	29				3					40	0.01	0.04	0.00
Chuck-will's-widow								cw		63					2	3	15	8	96	0.00	0.10	0.12
Whip-poor-will	3		3							22	5		1		7	3	19	2	92	0.02	0.09	0.03
Chimney Swift	8	60	12	70	22	109		129	417	57	137	65	24	73	19	5	53	43	1303	0.64	1.21	0.66
Ruby-throated																						
Hummingbird	16	5	6	20		7	1	12	12	11	41	20	21	9	7	10	8	4	210	0.17	0.18	0.06
Belted Kingfisher	2		2	2	1	3		6	5	6	5	9	9	8	4	3	3		68	0.03	0.07	0.00
Red-headed Woodpecker						2			12	10	18	30	20	2	35	9	6	24	168	0.00	0.16	0.37
Red-bellied Woodpecker	14	5	17	52		46		61	120	68	173	130	109	70	58	48	53	30	1054	0.33	1.04	0.46
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	5		2												1	4		13	0.03	0.01	0.00
Downy Woodpecker	13	11	3	27	2	6	1	24	32	13	62	33	28	20	6	14	7	10	312	0.21	0.27	0.15
Hairy Woodpecker	4	16	1	7	9	1	1	3	11	5	8	7	7	4	4	7	4	2	101	0.14	0.07	0.03
Red-cockaded Woodpecker										4								2	6	0.00	0.00	0.03
Northern Flicker	6	3	2	17	2	4		23	23	7	11	17	11	8	10	7	6	10	167	0.11	0.14	0.15
Pileated Woodpecker	18	10	9	33	2	3	1	1	3	16	31	30	11	5	11	18	9	17	228	0.27	0.15	0.26
Eastern Wood-Pewee	1	13	6	12	7	14	1	5	ow	15	18	38	2	6	8	4	8	27	185	0.14	0.13	0.41
Acadian Flycatcher	2	2	6	3	12		1	1	3	13	68	25	24	18	21	21	6	15	241	0.09	0.22	0.23
Alder Flycatcher		14																	14	0.05	0.00	0.00
Willow Flycatcher			12																12	0.04	0.00	0.00
Least Flycatcher		16						1											17	0.06	0.00	0.00
<i>Empidonax</i> sp.																		1	1	0.00	0.00	0.02
Eastern Phoebe	23	10	17	52	6	18	1	24	34	32	56	63	37	13	14	11	28		439	0.40	0.37	0.00
Great Crested Flycatcher	6		3	1		14	2	32	37	168	110	133	46	45	60	56	44	83	840	0.04	0.83	1.27
Eastern Kingbird	2	2	14	13		35		31	17	104	27	82	9	38	18	48	30	22	492	0.12	0.49	0.34
Loggerhead Shrike										7		1			1		13		22	0.00	0.02	0.00



Species	Trans	Bals	Hend	Bunc	BlMt	Ired	Hang	Fors	Gbro	SoPi	ChHi	Jord	Durh	Wake	Falls	Kerr	RaRo	Onsl	total	mnts	pied	coast
White-eyed Vireo	6		5	9				5	2	43	35	24	84	4	20	34	20	24	315	0.07	0.30	0.37
Yellow-throated Vireo	1			5				1	1	6	9	16	13	3	13	17	6	3	94	0.02	0.09	0.05
Blue-headed Vireo	33	169	6	72	97		2	2	2	6	4	3	12		4	2	1		415	1.40	0.04	0.00
Warbling Vireo				2				2				1							5	0.01	0.00	0.00
Philadelphia Vireo							1							1					2	0.00	0.00	0.00
Red-eyed Vireo	40	76	26	172	22	23	13	52	143	89	264	274	212	65	163	206	66	11	1917	1.25	1.75	0.17
Blue Jay	48	26	34	92	3	54	2	79	151	93	163	125	138	54	60	42	101	50	1315	0.75	1.18	0.76
American Crow	138	49	68	245	25	114	1	115	289	249	264	345	122	92	133	152	212	112	2725	1.95	2.33	1.71
Fish Crow						2		9	21	32	50	31	37	26	24	33	20	10	295	0.00	0.32	0.15
Common Raven	2	21	1	2	11		1	4	7								43	5	49	0.14	0.01	0.00
Crow sp.										20							32		68	0.00	0.07	0.08
Horned Lark						2				14									48	0.00	0.05	0.00
Purple Martin	41		21	8		56		19	404	42	57	39	54	38	16	16	59	198	1068	0.26	0.89	3.02
Tree Swallow	115	1	14	42				4	10	6	11	70	12	2	33	17	1		338	0.64	0.18	0.02
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	32		25	73		10		35	56	31	70	37	14	20	33	53	34	16	539	0.48	0.44	0.24
Bank Swallow									cw			2							2	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cliff Swallow			5					69	cw	3	142	28	30	30	31	13	18		339	0.02	0.35	0.27
Barn Swallow			148	79		88		93	60	40	77	82	46	88	32	16	59	145	1118	1.08	0.76	2.21
Carolina Chickadee	65		35	83	11	26	2	56	121	102	225	145	133	77	96	49	60	26	1315	0.73	1.22	0.40
Black-capped Chickadee	36	32																	20	0.07	0.00	0.00
Tufted Titmouse	53	15	34	127	3	38	3	89	135	174	319	272	209	63	138	127	67	43	1909	0.86	1.82	0.66
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1			5	106														143	0.53	0.00	0.00
White-breasted Nuthatch	21	6	6	22	3	2	1	21	16	17	38	23	15	11	15	10	3	1	231	0.22	0.19	0.02
Brown-headed Nuthatch				2		12		13	24	65	78	59	24	24	37	20	5	23	386	0.01	0.40	0.35
Brown Creeper					35														52	0.19	0.00	0.00

Species	Trans	Bals	Hend	Bunc	BlMt	Ired	Hang	Fors	Gbro	SoPi	ChHi	Jord	Durh	Wake	Falls	Kerr	RaRo	Onsl	total	mntns	pied	coast
Carolina Wren	58	8	63	132		76	4	72	179	139	346	229	198	118	96	70	77	67	1932	0.97	1.79	1.02
House Wren	35	4	8	22		5		26	21	1	36	7	16	4	2		2	1	190	0.26	0.13	0.02
Winter Wren	1	27		6	75				1										110	0.40	0.00	0.00
Sedge Wren			2																2	0.01	0.00	0.00
Golden-crowned Kinglet	6	95			164														265	0.98	0.00	0.00
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		2	1	4			1	4	5	4	7		14		1		13		56	0.03	0.05	0.00
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	8		18	63	1	41		73	69	276	339	335	408	75	155	133	97	78	2169	0.33	2.23	1.19
Eastern Bluebird	65	1	39	60		118		79	125	97	149	185	109	80	80	90	112	64	1453	0.61	1.36	0.98
Veery		118		10	61			2	2		6	4	2	1	1				207	0.70	0.02	0.00
Gray-cheeked Thrush								cw	1			1							2	0.00	0.00	0.00
Swinson's Thrush						1	1	8	20		17	14	1	12					74	0.00	0.08	0.00
Hermit Thrush		4			35	1		1		1			3				9		54	0.14	0.02	0.00
Wood Thrush	10	22	15	68	5	45	6	26	49	18	90	66	45	14	16	29	3	8	535	0.45	0.45	0.12
American Robin	146	215	66	253	51	204	1	443	619	36	257	72	118	102	50	23	223	21	2900	2.71	2.39	0.32
Gray Catbird	24	66	12	40	25	19	1	54	140	55	109	40	53	21	13	11	23	13	719	0.62	0.60	0.20
Northern Mockingbird	37	3	49	60		121		53	234	161	141	142	64	40	65	83	109	134	1496	0.55	1.35	2.05
Brown Thrasher	28	12	26	23		47	2	42	93	36	66	56	20	30	16	31	34	40	602	0.33	0.53	0.61
European Starling	84	6	102	152		117		203	325	48	160	87	157	78	61	57	169	190	1996	1.28	1.63	2.90
American Pipit														5			4		9	0.00	0.01	0.00
Cedar Waxwing	9	64	124	72	30	386	12	505	370	166	119	94	31	98	60	27	78	2	2247	1.11	2.17	0.03
Blue-winged Warbler									cw				2						2	0.00	0.00	0.00
"Lawrence's" Warbler											1								1	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nashville Warbler															1				1	0.00	0.00	0.00
Northern Parula	18	19	14	11	2		1	38	42	31	143	99	134	31	57	36	27	21	724	0.24	0.71	0.32
Yellow Warbler	1	1	5	18		1		2	cw	1	3	7		1	9	8		4	61	0.09	0.04	0.06
Chestnut-sided Warbler	32	348	4	42	59	1	2	3	3	1		2		2		1			500	1.80	0.02	0.00



Species	Trans	Bals	Hend	Bunc	BlMt	Ired	Hang	Fors	Gbro	SoPi	ChHi	Jord	Durh	Wake	Falls	Kerr	RaRo	Onsl	total	mnts	pied	coast
Magnolia Warbler				1				3	cw					5	1	1			11	0.00	0.01	0.00
Cape May Warbler				3				8	3			1						2	17	0.01	0.01	0.03
Black-throated Blue Warbler																						
Yellow-rumped Warbler	14	111	3	84	61	3	9	44	80	4	90	45	17	31	13	4	5		618	1.01	0.38	0.00
Black-throated Green Warbler	11		2	68			10	68	67	76	50	56	218	4	55	114	65		864	0.30	0.87	0.00
Blackburnian Warbler	13	150	8	54	181	3	20	1	cw	2	2	3	4	1	1				441	1.51	0.04	0.00
Yellow-throated Warbler	5	25		36	53	2	2	3	cw										126	0.44	0.01	0.00
Pine Warbler	6					3		1		46	23	90	62	4	34	61	27	14	371	0.02	0.39	0.21
Prairie Warbler	2		3	3		18	6	11	24	56	124	218	69	27	125	54	43	39	822	0.03	0.86	0.60
Palm Warbler	4					1		1	4	38	33	65	36		47	31	28	58	342	0.00	0.32	0.89
Bay-breasted Warbler		1	4	24					1	3			2	1		3			43	0.12	0.01	0.00
Blackpoll Warbler		4																	5	0.01	0.00	0.00
Cerulean Warbler			1	12	11	2		5	2	1	1	1		5					41	0.09	0.02	0.00
Black-and-white Warbler				16												1			18	0.06	0.00	0.00
American Redstart	11	54	12	104	18	1	2	8	11	27	32	40	13	5	8	5	17	2	370	0.74	0.19	0.03
Prothonotary Warbler	1	9	26	23		9	1	11	14	9	43	42	12	10		3	3		216	0.22	0.18	0.00
Worm-eating Warbler						3		1	9	14	36	48	25	2	13	24	15	16	206	0.00	0.21	0.24
Swinson's Warbler	5		1	20			3	1	2		cw			1		1	1	5	40	0.10	0.01	0.08
Ovenbird										4								2	6	0.00	0.00	0.03
Northern Waterthrush	32	124	8	142	29		6	7	22	39	134	145	73	20	54	95	33	17	980	1.24	0.70	0.26
Louisiana Waterthrush	1		8					2	4	1	6	1	3	1	1				28	0.03	0.02	0.00
Kentucky Warbler	3		2	3	1				4	7	17	9	11	9	4		6		76	0.03	0.07	0.00
Common Yellowthroat				4					1	6	6	3	2		1		2	2	27	0.01	0.02	0.03
Hooded Warbler	22	60	32	9	4	7		39	70	46	103	110	148	22	39	56	20	33	820	0.47	0.74	0.50
	41	29	8	90	1		2	1	2	34	52	52	32	3	35	33	5	6	426	0.63	0.28	0.09



Species	Trans	Bals	Hend	Bunc	BlMt	Ired	Hang	Fors	Gbro	SoPi	ChHi	Jord	Durh	Wake	Falls	Kerr	RaRo	Onsl	total	mtns	pied	coast
Wilson's Warbler	6	97	1	48	70			1	1										1	0.00	0.00	0.00
Canada Warbler			9	6		6		1	1										223	0.82	0.00	0.00
Yellow-breasted Chat	109	313	66	202	76	34	1	84	168	18	33	53	38		15	32	15	17	246	0.06	0.24	0.26
Eastern Towhee										14				38	93	44	36	44	1871	2.84	1.18	0.67
Bachman's Sparrow	17	4	2	56	3	27		25	60	134	151	178	94	37	84	121	67	17	14	0.00	0.02	0.00
Chipping Sparrow								12	25	15	10	20	30	2	16	11	22		1077	0.30	1.09	0.26
Field Sparrow	8	3	37	18		11				1									240	0.24	0.19	0.00
Lark Sparrow																		1	1	0.00	0.00	0.00
Savannah Sparrow	5		6	2		1		14	2	17	1	3	3	2	6	4	105		171	0.05	0.18	0.00
Grasshopper Sparrow			5			26		11	3	11	2	2	2	1		1	2	5	64	0.02	0.07	0.00
<i>Ammodramus</i> sp.																			5	0.00	0.00	0.08
Song Sparrow	138	30	80	190	9	22		27	159	7	50	4	31	5		3	18		773	1.66	0.36	0.00
Swamp Sparrow	1		5					1	4	2	5	1	28		2	8	4		61	0.02	0.06	0.00
White-throated Sparrow	3			14		2		34	44	69	36	8	171	2	28	65	78		554	0.06	0.60	0.00
White-crowned Sparrow			1	2				1			2					6			11	0.01	0.01	0.00
Dark-eyed Junco	24	366	3	77	236					1							57		764	2.62	0.06	0.00
sparrow sp.												3							3	0.00	0.00	0.00
Summer Tanager			1			2		1	4	51	130	158	49	18	70	52	35	20	591	0.00	0.64	0.31
Scarlet Tanager	11	42	4	87	11	4	3	10	29	4	50	47	12	9	14	12	12		361	0.58	0.23	0.00
Northern Cardinal	83	7	81	189		153	2	189	470	322	679	342	363	163	204	149	139	127	3662	1.34	3.54	1.94
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	8	43	5	43	5	1	8	7	1	3	5	5	1	1		1	1		131	0.39	0.03	0.00
Blue Grosbeak	8		3			25		13	26	36	31	58	21	16	21	29	30	39	356	0.04	0.34	0.60
Indigo Bunting	29	47	46	108	27	20	1	54	95	37	123	210	74	32	41	102	28	58	1132	0.95	0.91	0.89
Painted Bunting																		18	18	0.00	0.00	0.27
Bobolink	3		9	82		45		2		9		6		2		2	18		178	0.35	0.09	0.00
Red-winged Blackbird	56		43	128		18		118	126	144	85	62	76	29	30	32	50	129	1126	0.84	0.86	1.97

Species	Trans	Bals	Hend	Bunc	BlMt	Ired	Hang	Fors	Gbro	SoPi	ChHi	Jord	Durh	Wake	Falls	Kerr	RaRo	Onsl	total	mnts	pied	coast
Eastern Meadowlark	12		13	21		58		17	14	69	6	37	39	19	18	36	47	17	423	0.17	0.40	0.26
Common Grackle	36		51	94		224		212	511	93	157	317	208	108	129	175	2141	197	4653	0.67	4.77	3.01
Boat-tailed Grackle																		96	96	0.00	0.00	1.47
Brown-headed Cowbird	11	1	21	31		19	1	50	128	44	126	136	294	26	90	61	29	54	1122	0.24	1.12	0.82
Orchard Oriole	3		23	13		2		14	12	33	18	44	25	7	12	23	20	21	270	0.14	0.23	0.32
Baltimore Oriole				11		1		30	9	1		1				2			55	0.04	0.05	0.00
Purple Finch	3					2													5	0.01	0.00	0.00
House Finch	22	2	29	47		35		48	120	49	190	54	48	43	21	6	26	9	749	0.37	0.71	0.14
Red Crossbill	4			8															12	0.04	0.00	0.00
Pine Siskin	66	1		41	21	3		3	25	100	14		3		9	4			290	0.48	0.18	0.00
American Goldfinch	140	17	46	188	3	59		86	292	64	312	241	157	76	93	94	52	6	1926	1.46	1.70	0.09
House Sparrow	3		10	28		56		33	53	14	65	43	59	15	19	6	33	26	463	0.15	0.44	0.40
total species	109	85	108	116	53	101	45	127	124	133	120	124	119	114	110	121	118	143	223	1.75	1.51	2.18
total individuals	2565	3279	2095	5397	1712	3158	146	4767	8769	5239	9110	8490	6679	3065	3923	4268	5921	5886	84469	55.85	70.83	89.86
# participants	17	17	9	27	12	12	9	34	32	20	46	49	19	27	19	15	13	23	400			

cw: count week

Column key:

Trans	Transylvania	Fors	Forsythe County	Falls	Falls Lake
Bals	Balsam Mountains	Gbro	Greensboro	Kerr	Kerr Lake
Hend	Henderson County	SoPi	Southern Pines	RaRo	Raven Rock
Bunc	Buncombe County	ChHi	Chapel Hill	Onsl	Onslow County
BlMt	Black Mountains	Jord	Jordan Lake	mnts	mountains
Ired	Iredell County	Durh	Durham	pied	piedmont
Hang	Hanging Rock	Wake	Wake County	coast	coast

Table 2. Summary of party hours and miles

	total	on foot	Party hours		by canoe/ kayak/ boat	night	feeder watch
			by car	by bicycle			
Transylvania	42.00	8.00	34.00				
Balsam Mts	72.75	44.25	30.50				
Henderson	30.95	11.25	19.70				
Buncombe	77.25	29.00	48.25			2.25	
Black Mts	46.50	27.00	11.50				
Iredell	28.50	8.00	20.50				8.00
Hanging Rock	9.00	9.00					
Forsyth	67.50	59.00	7.50	1.00		1.00	
Greensboro	143.50	81.50	62.00				
Southern							
Pines	69.30	25.82	43.48			3.50	0.50
Chapel Hill	127.00	94.00	25.50		7.50	1.00	10.00
Jordan Lake	141.25	101.60	26.65		13.00	2.00	
Durham	73.55	63.75	8.05			0.75	1.00
Wake	49.00	46.00	3.00			1.00	
Falls Lake	65.85	53.30	12.55			0.75	3.00
Kerr Lake	67.50	56.25	11.25			1.75	
Raven Rock	55.00	32.00	23.00			2.70	
Onslow	65.50	29.50	29.50		6.50	3.50	
total	1231.90	779.22	416.93	1.00	27.00	20.20	22.50

	total	on foot	Party miles		canoe/ kayak/ boat	night
			by car	by bicycle		
Transylvania	212.00	12.00	200.00			
Balsam Mts	220.00	34.00	186.20			
Henderson	173.10	8.10	165.00			
Buncombe	308.50	22.00	286.50			1.50
Black Mts	70.10	27.40	42.70			
Iredell	141.00	9.00	132.00			
Hanging Rock	9.00	9.00				
Forsyth	145.25	35.25	103.00	7.00		0.25
Greensboro	435.90	52.00	383.90			
Southern						
Pines	433.25	19.75	413.50			
Chapel Hill	272.00	89.00	176.00		7.00	0.75
Jordan Lake	324.60	74.10	245.00		5.50	9.00
Durham	121.50	54.50	67.00			
Wake	95.00	44.00	51.00			
Falls Lake	170.50	55.25	115.25			
Kerr Lake	143.25	36.25	107.00			2.00
Raven Rock	326.25	24.25	302.00			15.00
Onslow	458.25	27.25	401.00		30.00	33.00
total	4059.45	633.10	3377.05	7.00	42.50	61.50



## 2008 Annual Report of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee

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**Donna Slyce<sup>1</sup>, Chair, Giff Beaton, Lex Glover, Chris Hill,  
Taylor Piephoff, Will Post, Steve Wagner**

<sup>1</sup> 304 Diamond Lane, Ridgeway, SC 29130

In 2008, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee completed action on 10 records. Of these, eight were accepted and two were not accepted. Among the accepted reports were two records that added a new species to the state list in the Definitive category and one report that added a new species to the state list in the Provisional II category. A report of a Snail Kite found in the community of Rimini in Clarendon County in mid-May of 2007 accompanied by numerous photographs and a detailed report of a Mountain Plover accompanied by photographs added these two species to the state list. A report of a European Goldfinch found in Charleston County accompanied by excellent photographs added this species to the state list in the Provisional II category, as most members believed the bird to be a foreign introduction.

Committee membership changed in 2008. Nathan Dias and Tim Kalbach rotated off the committee. The number of committee members was allowed to fall back to seven, as it had been for many years, at the request of the chair.

The current state list stands at 454 species, with 16 Provisional II species and 14 Hypothetical species. The most recent revision of the state list can be found online at <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/brc>. The online list includes review categories in addition to list categories for each species.

Committee activity is reviewed below.

### Reports Accepted

**Greater Shearwater (07-07-08)** – An injured bird found in Lancaster County was taken into rehabilitation by Jennifer Gordon who submitted a written report accompanied by photos. The record was accepted.

**Snail Kite (05-07-04)** – This bird was first observed by Lloyd Moon, who reported the bird, and was later enjoyed by many observers. The bird was found on 14 May 2007 at Elliot's Crawfish Farm in the community of Rimini in Clarendon County and was present through mid-June, having been much photographed during his stay. The report was accepted unanimously by the committee. This accepted report adds the species to the state list in the Definitive category and represents a first North American record north of the small range in the state of Florida for this sedentary species.

**Mountain Plover (10-07-06)** – A bird observed and photographed well at Huntington Beach State Park in October of 2007 by Jerry Kerschner was

reported. The report was accepted unanimously. This accepted report adds the species to the state list in the Definitive category.

**Black Guillemot (01-08-02)** – A bird found at Huntington Beach State Park in January of 2008 by Dr. Gary Graves was written up for the committee and documented in a Field Note published in *The Chat* (Graves 2008a). The documentation was accompanied by photographs. The report was accepted.

**Cave Swallow (01-08-03)** – A report of a bird found roosting in a picnic shelter at Huntington Beach State Park by Dr. Gary Graves was written up for the committee and documented in a Field Note published in *The Chat* (Graves 2008b). The documentation included good photographs. The record was accepted.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler (01-07-02)** – A written report of a bird observed at Santee National Wildlife Refuge in January of 2007 was circulated due to the late date of the observation. The species has been noted in the state in winter previously. The report was accepted by the committee.

**Western Tanager (05-07-09)** – A report of a bird present at a feeder in Conway for most of the winter in 2007 was submitted by Gary Phillips. The well-written report was accepted by the committee.

**European Goldfinch (09-07-07)** – An individual of this species was observed in mid-September at a feeder on Wadmalaw Island in Charleston County by Dr. Murry Thompson and documented for the committee with a written report and excellent photographs. The report was accepted by the committee as a “human-assisted” arrival because the species is often kept as a caged bird due to their striking plumage and pleasant song. This report adds the species to the state list in the Provisional II category.

### Reports Not Accepted

**Whooping Crane (02-07-03)** – A report of this species from the immediate coast in February 2007 was not accepted by the committee due to a lack of convincing detail in the written description.

**Pyrhuloxia (05-07-05)** – An individual of this species was reported from a suburban back yard in the upper coastal plain in May of 2007. The written report was not detailed enough to rule out near look-alike common species and the report was not accepted by the committee.

### Literature Cited

- Graves, G. R. 2008a. Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*) at Murrells Inlet: Third documented record for South Carolina. *Chat* 72:46–48
- Graves, G. R. 2008b. Possible case of weather-mediated mortality of Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva pallida*) wintering in South Carolina. *Chat* 72:95–98

## General Field Notes

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*General Field Notes* briefly report such items as rare sightings, unusual behaviors, significant nesting records, or summaries of such items.

*First, second, or third sightings of species in either state must be submitted to the appropriate Bird Records Committee prior to publication in The Chat.*

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### **Breeding Evidence for the Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*) in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina: Reports of Fledglings and Eggs**

**Marcus B. Simpson, Jr.**

*P. O. Box 337, Advance, NC 27006*

#### **Breeding Season Distribution in North America**

The Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*) nests predominantly in boreal forests of Canada and adjacent north-central and northeast portions of the United States. The breeding range extends southward in the eastern states through the Appalachian highlands to the mountains of West Virginia and Virginia. In Tennessee and North Carolina, the birds have been documented during the nesting season at Long Hope Valley, Roan Mountain, Grandfather Mountain, the Black Mountains, Unaka Mountains, Great Balsam Mountains, Pisgah Ridge, and Great Craggy Mountains (Lynch and LeGrand 1989; Simpson 1992; Potter et al. 2006). Preferred nesting habitat is dense, young growth of spruce (*Picea* spp.), fir (*Abies* spp.), or hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*). This note briefly reviews data that support nesting of the species in North Carolina.

#### **Records by John Cairns**

Apparently the earliest evidence suggesting that Magnolia Warblers nested in the southern Blue Ridge was reported by John Cairns from his observations in the Great Craggy Mountains of Buncombe County, North Carolina during the 1880s and 1890s. Cairns (1891) commented that "I think this bird must breed, as young are common in July". Cairns was renowned for his ability to locate nests in the dense vegetation of the high mountains, and Pearson et al. (1919) conveyed an 1899 report that Cairns had collected a nest with eggs and that these had been sent to his friend, Samuel Bragg Ladd of West Chester, PA. Most of Ladd's large egg collection was sold to Joseph Parker Norris of Philadelphia. Most of the Norris collection was



subsequently acquired by Nelson Hoy and in turn by the Western Foundation for Vertebrate Zoology (Lloyd Kiff pers. comm.).

To date, I have been unable to discover the whereabouts or fate of the Cairns nest and eggs. Careful investigation has failed to locate the specimens at the Western Foundation for Vertebrate Zoology (Lloyd Kiff pers. comm.), Museum of Comparative Zoology, US National Museum, Field Museum, Academy of Natural Sciences, American Museum of Natural History, NC State Museum of Natural Sciences, and the Reading Museum. Specimens attributed to Cairns are known to be present at other museums, however, so the reported set may yet be found.

Because of common errors in cataloging, filing, storage, and retrieval of egg sets, particularly those from the 1800s, it may be that the Cairns eggs are extant but not yet recognized or discovered. The elusive nature of collections from the Cairns era is further compounded by the widespread practice of selling and exchanging eggs and nests during the 1800s, such that specimens may be labeled with the name and home locality of the individual who acquired the material, rather than revealing the identity and location of the original collector. The eggs might also have been sold or exchanged to another collector, or perhaps lost or destroyed. The report by Pearson et al. (1919) might later have been found to be invalid, due to an error in identification or attribution.

### **Recent Breeding Season Records in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains**

Over the past 25 years, Magnolia Warblers have been reported during the breeding season in June and July from at least eight locales in the southern Blue Ridge Mountain province. The species has been a regular summer resident in suitable habitat in the higher elevations at the Mt. Rogers/Whitetop area of southern Virginia (Phil Shelton, pers. comm.; F. R. Scott, pers. comm.; Simpson 1976, 1992). Along the North Carolina border with Tennessee, the species has been noted at Roan Mountain fairly consistently for some years (Knight 2008 and pers. comm.; Simpson, 1992). Farther southwest on the Tennessee side of the state line, adults have been observed carrying food at Unaka Mountain on occasions dating to the mid-1980s (Simpson, present study; Lewis 2000; Knight 2008). More recently, the first proof of breeding at the Unakas included a report by Allan Trently of fledglings being fed by adults on 27 June 2000 (Lewis 2000), and by Kevin Elam on 8 July 2003 (Knight 2008). Away from the state line, two singing males were noted in June 1988 in Long Hope Valley in Watauga County (Lynch and LeGrand 1989). The species has been present during June and July on a number of occasions since at least the mid-1980s at Grandfather Mountain and nearby Beacon Heights (Simpson 1992 and present study). In the Black Mountains of North Carolina, the occurrence of singing males has been less frequent and more erratic than elsewhere in the southern Blue Ridge (M. J. Westphal, pers. comm.; Simpson 1992 and present study). Much farther to the south, the species was reported on 28–29 June 1997 at the Mount Pisgah campground along Pisgah Ridge (Davis,

1998) and in late June 2002 at Black Balsam Knob in southern Haywood County (Davis, 2002), also in this range.

### Present Report

More recent evidence that Magnolia Warblers nest in North Carolina includes the presence of two adults feeding two fledglings at Grandfather Mountain on 25 June 2008. From 9:10 AM to 9:20 AM I observed the birds at close range in a fire cherry (*Prunus pensylvanica*) at the margin of a dense thicket of Catawba rhododendron (*Rhododendron catawbiense*), mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), and blueberries (*Vaccinium* spp.), admixed with maples (*Acer* spp.), red spruce (*Picea rubens*), and Fraser magnolia (*Magnolia fraseri*). The site is along a ridge on the south rim of the headwaters of Boone Fork at an elevation of 4620 feet. The birds eventually became alarmed at my presence and retreated into the heath thicket.

I have previously noted adult males singing in this area in June and early July on numerous visits between 1985 and 2008. On several occasions in other years I have observed adults carrying food in this area, but the impenetrable vegetation and rugged terrain preclude searching off trail for a nest or young. I have also noted adult males singing as if on territory during June and early July from 1985 to 2009 in suitable habitat elsewhere on the south side of Grandfather Mountain, at locations ranging in elevation from 4420 feet to 5600 feet.

### Summary

To date, the best evidence for breeding by Magnolia Warblers in the southern Blue Ridge includes adult birds feeding fledglings at Unaka Mountain in Tennessee (Lewis 2000; Knight 2008) and at Grandfather Mountain, North Carolina (present study). The eggs and nest reportedly collected by Cairns in the 1890s has not been discovered or verified independently from the second hand account published by Pearson et al. (1919). Observers should continue to report evidence for nesting by this species in the region.

### Literature Cited

- Cairns, J. S. 1891. List of the birds of Buncombe County, North Carolina. Privately printed.
- Davis, R. 1998. Briefs for the files. Chat 62:41–47.
- Davis, R. 2002. Briefs for the files. Chat 66:149–155.
- Knight, R. L. 2008. The Birds of Northeast Tennessee. Second edition. Bristol Bird Club, Bristol, TN.
- Lewis, R. P. 2000. The season: Eastern mountain region. Migrant, 71:122–123.
- Lynch, J. M., and H. E. LeGrand, Jr. 1989. Breeding season birds of Long Hope Valley, Watauga and Ashe Counties, N.C. Chat 53:29–35.

- Pearson, T. G., C. S. Brimley, and H. H. Brimley. 1919. Birds of North Carolina. North Carolina Geological and Economic Survey, Raleigh.
- Potter, E. F., J. F. Parnell, R. P. Teulings, and R. Davis. 2006. Birds of the Carolinas (second edition). University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.
- Simpson, M. B., Jr. 1980. The letters of John S. Cairns to William Brewster, 1887–1895. *North Carolina Historical Review* 55:306–338.
- Simpson, M. B., Jr. 1976. Breeding season records of the Magnolia Warbler in Grayson County, Virginia. *Raven*, 47:56.
- Simpson, M. B., Jr. 1992. Birds of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

## **Fifty Years Ago in *The Chat*—September 1959**

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General Field Notes in the September 1959 issue included reports of a number of significant records. E. Milby Burnham collected an immature Eared Grebe at Charleston on 14 Jan 1959, the first state record for South Carolina. Peter Manigault observed a White-tailed Tropicbird 18 nautical miles SSE of Charleston on 29 May 1959, the third state record. Robert Soots, James Parnell, and John Funderburg observed a Ward's Great Blue Heron on 23 Jan 1959 in a shallow farm pond near Lake Wheeler, southwest of Raleigh. It was thought to be the first state record of this subspecies. John Hatcher reported a Mallard nest in Aiken County, SC that was apparently the first documented nesting in the state. Ernest Cutts reported that American Coots had appeared in the newly constructed 100-acre duck pond at Magnolia Gardens, and young were observed, but despite extensive searching an actual nest could not be found. At the time there was not yet a confirmed nest record in the state. H. A. Hespenheide, F. C. Richardson, W. F. Rountrey, and Paul Sykes observed a Ruff on 21 March 1959 by the Knotts Island Causeway in Currituck Co., NC. This was the second state record, the first having been one collected in Raleigh on 6 May 1892 by H. H. Brimley. Bill Joyner reported seeing a pair of Sooty Terns on 10 June 1959 on an island near Cape Lookout. They were behaving as if they were nesting, but he was unable to determine which, if any, nest belonged to them. The pair was still present on another visit on 4 July. Robert Soots reported observing a Gray Kingbird in Umstead State Park near Raleigh on 16 Apr 1959. It was observed at length that day, among a large wave of migrants, but the next day it and all of the other migrants were gone. A Bewick's Wren was banded in Hillsborough, NC on 23 Sept 1958. A male Bachman's Warbler returned 22 Apr 1959 to the spot where it was found the previous year, across the Ashley River from Charleston. It remained until at least 16 May and was "watched by scores". —Kent Fiala



## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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Josh Southern  
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Raleigh, NC 27606  
joshsouthern79@gmail.com

(All dates Spring 2009, unless otherwise noted)

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*Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.*

Winter	December 1–February 28	due March 20
Spring	March 1–May 31	due June 20
Summer	June 1–July 31	due August 20
Fall	August 1–November 30	due December 20

*Reports can be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you type them and list the sightings according to the birds in checklist order (not according to dates or locations). If you submit your report to me through e-mail, please type your report directly into the message or copy it from a word processing program directly into the message. You may also attach your file to the e-mail, but if you do, please let me know the program used and also send a second version saved as a text (.txt) file.*

*Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.*

*Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.*

*I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.*

*If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.*

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** A flock of 50 was reported from Terra Ceia, NC, 19 Apr (*fide* Alan Meijer), in the same area where smaller flocks were reported in recent years. The fact that this area has provided the state's only sightings of this species in the past four years suggests that these birds are of domestic origin. At the Savage Impoundment within Donnelley WMA, Colleton Co, SC, possibly the most reliable site to find this species in

the Carolinas, 15 were counted on 9 May (Steve Compton, Richard Hayes). Three arrived at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, also on 9 May (Steve Calver).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Quite late was one seen on the pond at the Cedar Island, NC, ferry terminal, 26 Apr (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, Carol Reigle) and 27 Apr (Al Gamache, Steve Shaffer). Though this bird was reportedly wary of humans, one still has to wonder, considering the late date of the sighting, whether or not this bird was of wild origin.

**Snow Goose:** Somewhat late were flocks of “hundreds” in Moyock, NC, 27 Mar (Shirley Remaley) and of at least 75, flying over US-64, 9 miles E of Wilson, NC, 29 Mar (Matt Daw).

**Brant:** A large number for any site in the Carolinas, and especially noteworthy for a site away from the Hatteras/Ocracoke Inlet, 50 were seen on the sound-side of Oregon Inlet, NC, 4 Mar (Nick Anich).

**American Wigeon:** A drake found at the Archie Elledge Water Treatment Plant (WTP), Winston-Salem, NC, 9 May (John Haire) was somewhat late.

**Mottled Duck:** A female was well-observed at the Eagle Island spoil area, Wilmington, NC, 2 May (Ricky Davis, Derb Carter), providing about the fourth definite record for the state.

**Canvasback:** A male, probably injured and present since the winter, was seen on Roanoke Rapids Lake, from Vulture access, Northampton Co, NC, on the late date of 9 May (Ricky Davis).

**Redhead:** Notable for the mountain locality were two on the pond at the WTP on NC-191 in Henderson Co, NC, 15 Mar (Vin Stanton).

**Ring-necked Duck:** Late to depart were individuals found in Allendale Co, SC, 9 May (Carroll Richard, Kathleen O’Grady); on Lake Crabtree, NC, 24 May (Ali Iyob); and on Bass Lake, Blowing Rock, NC, where a seemingly healthy female remained until the end of the period (Ricky Davis).

**Greater Scaup:** Five found on Lake Julian, Buncombe Co, NC, 12 Mar (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey) provided a good count for a site so far from the coast.

**Lesser Scaup:** A pair remained, very late, on Bass Lake, Blowing Rock, NC, through the end of the period (Ricky Davis).

**Surf Scoter:** A male was found on the W end of Oak Island, NC, on the late date of 24 May (Sharon Smart). Most scoters depart the Carolinas by mid-April but a small number have been known to linger into late spring and early summer.

**White-winged Scoter:** Twenty-five, a good count for this less-common scoter, were seen from the Springmaid Pier in Myrtle Beach, SC, 14 Mar (Richard & Dorothy Rosche). One, seemingly injured, was found on the Bogue Sound off Morehead City, NC, on the late date of 28 Apr (John Fussell).

**Bufflehead:** Rather late and farther inland than usual was a seemingly healthy female found on Julian Price Memorial Park Pond on the Blue Ridge

Parkway (BRP) in Watauga Co, NC, 13 May (Josh Southern, Darin Sujjavanich).

**Common Goldeneye:** The female that visited a pond in Meggett, SC, this winter remained until 29 Mar (Cherrie Sneed).

**Hooded Merganser:** A sporadic breeder in the Carolinas, an adult Hooded Merganser was seen with four chicks in the New Hope Creek marshes of Jordan Lake, NC, a previously-noted breeding site, 20 May (Jacob Socolar). Thought to be nesting, though not confirmed, was a pair at Saluda Shoals Park in Columbia, SC, 8 May (Patricia Voelker) and a female in flight near Hamilton, Martin Co, NC, 25 May (Merrill Lynch).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Noteworthy inland migrants included four found on a small golf course pond on a morning of dense fog in Matthews, NC, 26 Mar (Taylor Piephoff); 40 on Lake Julian, Buncombe Co, NC, 30 Mar (Marilyn Westphal); four on Salem Lake, NC, 30 Mar (Phil Dickinson); and two on a lake on the campus of Furman University, Greenville, SC, 4 Apr (Jeff O'Connell). Somewhat late were 12 females seen from Vulture access on Roanoke Rapids Lake, NC, 19 Apr (Ricky Davis); two females near the dam at Jordan Lake, NC, 23 Apr (Phil Warren); a female, possibly sick or injured, at Archie Elledge WTP, Winston-Salem, NC, 2 May (John Haire); and a female on the dairy pond at the NCSU Field Laboratories along Lake Wheeler Rd, Raleigh, NC, 13 May (Dave Lenat).

**Ruddy Duck:** One found on Harris Lake, NC, during a "Wild-a-thon" Big Day Count, 3 May, was somewhat late (Tom Driscoll, et al.).

**Wild Turkey:** Indicators of this species' recent population growth and range expansion were the high number, 71, tallied during the Buncombe Co, NC, Spring Bird Count (SBC), 3 May (*vide* Marilyn Westphal) and the sighting of a female in Emerald Isle, NC, 24 May (John Voigt, *vide* John Fussell) that may be one of the first on NC's barrier inlands in modern times.

**Pacific Loon:** This rare vagrant was found just off the beach near the entrance to Pawleys Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, 6 Mar (Jack Peachey, Bob Maxwell, Dave Gustafson, Bill Lanham). Two (!) were found on Clark Hill Lake, near the Richard B. Russell Dam, on the GA/SC border, 19 Apr (Jim Flynn, *vide* Mark Freeman), with both continuing until at least 27 Apr (Mark McShane, Max Medley) and one remaining until at least 24 May (Lois Stacey). This sighting provides the first photographic documentation of this species in South Carolina.

**Common Loon:** A migratory flock of 21 found on Lake Julian, Buncombe Co, NC, 30 Mar (Marilyn Westphal) provided a good count for that mountain locality. Late were individuals seen flying above Falls Dam, Falls Lake, NC, 17 Apr (Matt Daw); over Yates Mill Pond, Raleigh, NC, during the SBC, 9 May (John Connors, Diane Hardy); and, in breeding plumage, from the fishing pier at Ocean Isle, NC, 25 May (Taylor Piephoff).

**Red-necked Grebe:** One, possibly the same bird seen here off-and-on during the past two winters, was seen on Lake Crabtree, NC, 29 Mar (G. Gordon Brown) and 30 Mar (Ali Iyoob). One could wonder where this bird



goes when not at Lake Crabtree, as it has never been reported from any other lake in the area.

**Eared Grebe:** Of those that wintered at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, four still remained 10 Apr (Steve Calver). One, in breeding plumage, was found at the WTP in Goldsboro, NC, 2 May (Eric Dean, et al.), adding to the long list of Eared Grebe sightings at this location.

**Herald (Trinidad) Petrel:** This rare pelagic species was found on four of 19 daily pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 20 May–7 June, with individuals seen 20, 23, 29 May and 7 June (Brian Patteson).

**Fea's Petrel:** This rare pelagic species was found on five of 19 daily pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 20 May–7 June, with singles on 22, 29 May and 7 June, and doubles 21 and 27 May (Brian Patteson).

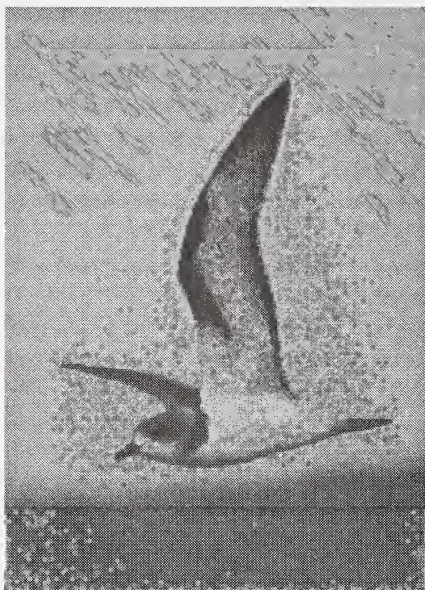
**Bermuda Petrel:** This very rare pelagic species was found on two of 19 daily pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 20 May–7 June, with one on 23 May, and three (!) on 29 May (Brian Patteson).

**Black-capped Petrel:** During a marine mammal survey 24 Apr, 12 were found about 80 mi SE of Cape Lookout, NC, at a depth of about 1800' (Ross McGregor). This species was seen on all 19 daily pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 20 May–7 June, with numbers running higher on the later trips, and a total of 359 seen altogether (Brian Patteson).

**Greater Shearwater:** One, headed E, passed about 300 yards off Long Beach, Brunswick Co, NC, 23 May (Ricky Davis), providing a rare from-shore sighting.

**Sooty Shearwater:** Though this species is more likely to be seen from shore than other pelagic species, strong easterly winds around 18–20 May pushed a higher-than-usual number of Sooty Shearwaters towards the coast. From-shore sightings included 30, headed E, just off Long Beach, NC, 23 May (Ricky Davis); three over the ocean at Fort Macon, Atlantic Beach, NC, 23 May (John Fussell); three at Pine Knoll Shores, NC, 24 May (Fussell); and two over the ocean at the fishing pier in Ocean Isle, NC, 25 May (Taylor Piephoff). A total of 491 were seen on 16 of the 19 daily pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 20 May–7 June, with numbers running higher on the early trips, and a one-day high count of 166 on 20 May (Brian Patteson).

**Manx Shearwater:** One was seen during a marine mammal survey, SE of Cape Lookout, NC, 24 Apr (Ross McGregor). An above-average number,



Bermuda Petrel, 23 May 2009, off Cape Hatteras, NC. Photo by Ned Brinkley.

29, was totaled from the daily pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 20 May–7 June, seen on 10 of 19 trips, with a one-day high count of eight on 21 May (Brian Patteson).

**Audubon's Shearwater:** Ten were seen during a marine mammal survey SE of Cape Lookout, NC, 24 Apr (Ross McGregor). A total of 395 were seen on the daily pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 20 May–7 June, with sightings on every trip but 20 May, and a high one-day count of 80 on 6 June (Brian Patteson).

**Storm-Petrel influx in mid-to-late May:** A tropical cyclone created strong easterly winds around 18–20 May, pushing storm-petrels closer to shore than usual, resulting in multiple from-shore sightings and findings of deceased and/or emaciated birds on beaches. The first non-pelagic sighting was made from the ferry in Cedar Island, NC, of a Leach's Storm-Petrel over the Pamlico Sound, just W of the dock, 18 May (George Armistead, Jesse Fagan, et al.). Other from-shore sightings included six Wilson's Storm-Petrels heading E up the coast at Long Beach, NC, 23 May (Ricky Davis); 20 Wilson's over the ocean at Fort Macon, Atlantic Beach, NC, 23 May (John Fussell); two Leach's over the surf at Pine Knoll Shores, NC, 24 May (Fussell); four Leach's and eight Wilson's off the fishing pier at Ocean Isle, NC, 25 May (Taylor Piephoff); 12+ Leach's and 12+ Wilson's off the W end of Oak Island, NC, 25 May (Sharon Smart); 11 storm-petrel sp. around the Little River Inlet, at the NC/SC border, 25 May (Chris Hill); and at least two Wilson's off the pier at Myrtle Beach SP, SC, 26 May (Sharon & Phil Turner). Reports of deceased and/or emaciated storm-petrels found on beaches included a Leach's at Pine Knoll Shores, NC, 24 May (Fussell); a Leach's at Fort Macon, Atlantic Beach, NC, 24 May (Randy Newman, *vide* Fussell); a Leach's on Waives Island, Horry Co, SC, 25 May (Hill); several storm-petrel sp. at Myrtle Beach SP, SC, 26 May (Ann Wilson, *vide* Turner); and four Leach's on Lea/Hutaff Island, Pender Co, NC, 29 May (Gilbert Grant).

**Wilson's Storm-Petrel:** A total of 5341 were seen on the daily pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 20 May–7 June, with a high one-day count of 465 made on 20 May (Brian Patteson).

**European Storm-Petrel:** This very rare vagrant was found once this spring, on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 29 May (Brian Patteson).

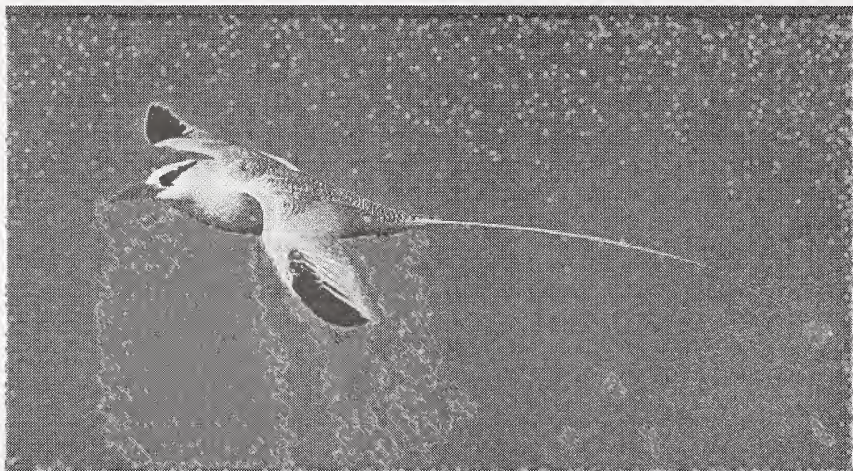
**Leach's Storm-Petrel:** A total of 214 were seen on the daily pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 20 May–7 June, with sightings on 16 of 19 trips, and one-day high counts of 36 on 23 and 24 May (Brian Patteson).

**Band-rumped Storm-Petrel:** A total of 175 were seen on the daily pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 20 May–7 June, with sightings on all 19 trips (Brian Patteson).

**Red-billed Tropicbird:** A full-tailed adult was observed for about an hour around the little pond just S of the salt pond at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, where it was also photographed, 10 Mar (Pat & Neal Moore, Brian Patteson). Another sighting of, presumably, the same adult bird was made at the same location, 21 Apr (Charlotte Fulcher, *vide* Patteson). These sightings



are significant for several reasons—this species is very rarely seen onshore, full-tailed adults are very rarely seen in the Carolinas, and the possibility of the same tropicbird hanging around a Carolina beach for over a month is extraordinary! Offshore, where this species is more expected but still rare, two were found on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 27 May, and individuals were also seen 28 and 31 May (Patteson).



Red-billed Tropicbird, 10 Mar 2009, Cape Point, NC. Photo by Brian Patteson.

**American White Pelican:** Of the several flocks that wintered in the Carolinas this year, those which remained into spring were 60–80 at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 6 Mar (Bill Newton); nine at the Spring Creek Impoundment ponds, off NC-33, Beaufort Co and Pamlico Co, NC, 8 Mar (Al Gamache); and 12 at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 10 Apr (Ricky Davis). Sightings of migrating flocks included 16 on the Yadkin River, just below the High Rock Dam, Davidson Co and Rowan Co, NC, 26 Mar (Paul Hinkle); 12+ on Lake Robinson, Greenville, SC, 18 Apr (J. B. Hines); and seven flying over the Intracoastal Waterway in Wilmington, NC, 2 May (Dan Kaplan).

**Anhinga:** Some of the westernmost reports were of five at the Middle Creek Bottomlands in Johnston Co, NC, 19 Apr (Matt Daw) and four circling over Pee Dee NWR, NC, 10 May (Michael McCloy).

**Magnificent Frigatebird:** A female seen soaring, heading NE, very high over Bald Head Island, NC, 23 May (Ricky Davis) provides the only spring report of this rare vagrant from the tropics.

**American Bittern:** Outside the coastal plain, where this species is less common, sightings were made in Matthews, NC, where one hit a building during a morning of dense fog, 26 Mar, and was taken to a wildlife rehabilitator where it soon recovered (Jennifer Gordon, *fide* Taylor Piephoff); in Mill Spring, NC, 3 Apr (Jerry Johnson); in the floodplain of Little Beaverdam Creek, Falls Lake, Wake Co, NC, 24 Apr (Mike Turner); at Butner Game Lands, near Durham, NC, during the SBC, 26 Apr (Norm



Budnitz); and at Anilorac Farm, Orange Co, NC, 2 May (Ricky Davis, Derb Carter).

**Least Bittern:** One seen and heard at the Flat River waterfowl impoundments N of Falls Lake, Durham Co, NC, 12 Apr (Brian Murphy) was locally unusual.

**Great Egret:** In the mountains, where this species is less common, sightings were made of 12 around a small pond near Brevard, NC, 31 Mar (Tom Joyce) and eight near where NC-191 crosses the French Broad River, in Henderson Co, NC, 5 Apr (Wayne Forsythe, Marilyn Westphal).

**Snowy Egret:** The farthest inland sightings were made of an adult in breeding plumage at Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, 2 May (Ricky Davis, Derb Carter), and of one at Cowan's Ford WR, NW Mecklenburg Co, NC, 23 May (Tomm Lorenzin).

**Reddish Egret:** Rare spring sightings included the juvenile that wintered on the N end of Hilton Head, SC, until at least 24 Apr (David Lovett); a juvenile in the inlet next to Waites Island, Horry Co, SC, 25 May (Chris Hill); and one at the base of the jetty at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 30 May (Stephen Thomas).

**Cattle Egret:** Unusually far inland were individuals found in a football field in Bethel, Haywood Co, NC, 22 Apr (Brian McDermott) and near a farm pond in Guilford Co, NC, 24 Apr (Dan Chambers).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Two found at the Flat River waterfowl impoundments, N of Falls Lake, Durham Co, NC, 12 Apr (Brian Murphy) provide the farthest inland spring report.

**Glossy Ibis:** Remarkably far inland was one in the marsh area of the Concord Mills Wetland, Cabarrus Co, NC, 5–7 May (Taylor Piephoff, Rob Van Epps). This sighting is one of the westernmost ever noted in the Carolinas.



Roseate Spoonbill, 23 Apr 2009, Bear Island WMA, SC. Photo by Chris Feeney

**Roseate Spoonbill:** Rare spring sightings were made at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, where two juveniles were photographed 23 Apr (Chris Feeney); at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, where two were seen 24 Apr through the end of the period (Steve Calver); and on the Port Royal Sound mudflats, Hilton Head, SC, where one was found 25 May (Rich Blake).

**Wood Stork:** Sightings of this species outside its typical range were made at Cowan's Ford WR, NW Mecklenburg Co, where a first-year bird was photographed 30 May (John Bonestell, Tyler Mahan) and in S Nags Head, NC, where two were seen soaring overhead, 31 May (Jeff Lewis).

**Swallow-tailed Kite:** Noteworthy for their northern locality were sightings of individuals in flight over Bear Creek, Chatham Co, NC, 19 Apr (Parker & Holly Backstrom); the Outer Banks, between Avon and Rodanthe, NC, 25 Apr (Jeff Lewis); and Smyrna, NC, 28 Apr (Barbara Pigott, *fide* John Fussell). This species was found again this year along the Cape Fear River near Riegelwood, NC, with five, including two definite pairs, being seen 23 May (Ricky Davis). This species is thought to nest in this area, which, if confirmed, would make this location the species' northernmost known breeding site.

**Snail Kite:** A banded, recently-deceased and emaciated adult male was found in a small cemetery in the Crusoe Island area south of Lake Waccamaw, NC, 10 Apr (Keith Rogers, *fide* Chris Helms). The specimen was given to the NC Museum of Natural History. Research based on the band tells us the bird is twelve years old and from the Florida population. North Carolina has no previous records of this species.

**Mississippi Kite:** One seen over the campus of the University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, 7 Apr (John Grego) was somewhat early. Locally unusual was a pair seen in S Mecklenburg Co, NC, inside the I-485 loop, from late April into May (*fide* Taylor Piephoff).

**Bald Eagle:** Sightings of this species in the mountains, where less common, included a juvenile at Lake Julian, Buncombe Co, NC, 24 Apr (Wayne Forsythe); one over Balsam Mountain, NC, during the SBC, 16 May (Tom Tribble, Nancy Casey, *fide* Marilyn Westphal); and an adult being chased off by a territorial Peregrine Falcon at Buzzard's Roost, a cliff-face over the Pigeon River, Haywood Co, NC, 18 May (Chris Kelly). An immature seen at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville, SC, 7 May, was a first for the park (Paul Serridge). Fifty-four birds, 23 adults and 31 juveniles, seen around Jordan Lake, NC, during the Chapel Hill SBC, 2 May (*fide* Will Cook) provided an excellent spring count for this rebounding species.

**Northern Harrier:** Somewhat late was one found in greater Raleigh, NC, during a "Wild-a-thon" Big Day Count, 3 May (Tom Driscoll et al.).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** A pair found nesting in the Garren Creek bottomlands of Fairview, NC, 7 May (Kevin Caldwell) provides rare nesting confirmation for the state.

**Broad-winged Hawk:** This species started arriving in the Carolinas on 4 Apr, when individuals were seen during a bird-walk at Congaree Swamp,

Columbia, SC (John Grego, Patricia Voelker) and at the Museum of Life and Science, Durham, NC (Greg Dodge). Two seen over the ferry terminal at Cedar Island, NC, 3 May (John Fussell et al.), were “probably migrants.”

**“Krider’s” Red-tailed Hawk:** The juvenile that wintered at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, was last seen 29 Mar (John Fussell, Jack Fennell).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** A possible, though admittedly out-of-place, sighting was made in Efland, NC, 16 Apr, only a mile from where one was seen in December (Dave Snyder).

**Golden Eagle:** Two were reported this spring—an adult seen soaring over a farm in Watauga Co, NC, 8 Mar (Merrill Lynch) and one seen flying N over the BRP between NC-151 and NC-191, S of Asheville, NC, 8 May (Tom Tribble).

**Merlin:** Outside the coastal plain, where this species is less common, sightings of individuals were made at Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 29 Mar (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey); at Baileywick Park in N Raleigh, NC, 15 Apr (Matt Daw); over Roan Mountain, NC, 17 Apr (Christine Kelly); and at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville, SC, 7 May (Paul Serridge).

**Peregrine Falcon:** Locally unusual were individuals seen at Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 16 Mar (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey) and flying over a yard in Clayton, NC, 5 May (Clyde Sorenson).

**Clapper Rail:** Forty-six were counted in the span of only 90 minutes in the accessible marshes on the W end of Daniel Island, SC, 9 Mar (Shawn Hayes), providing evidence of a high concentration of this species at that site.

**Sora:** Interestingly, two were found in Mecklenburg Co, NC, in mid-April—one at Cowan’s Ford WR, 15 Apr (David Wright, John Bonestell) and the other in the Piedmont Prairie restoration area at Latta Plantation Nature Preserve, 21 Apr, in, as noted by the observer, “as dry and rocky a site as I have ever seen a Sora” (Kevin Metcalf).

**Purple Gallinule:** One found at the Savage Impoundment within Donnelley WMA, SC, 9 May (Steve Compton, Richard Hayes) provides the spring’s only report.

**Common Moorhen:** Somewhat farther inland than usual were the three seen in the wetlands near the WTP in Goldsboro, NC, 2 May (Eric Dean).

**Sandhill Crane:** Walter Harriman’s sighting of three Sandhill Cranes flying over Henderson Field, 14 Dec, was incorrectly attributed to Wallace, NC. The correct location of the sighting was Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville, SC, where it provided the first park record of the species (*vide* Paul Serridge). This spring’s sightings involved two flying over a yard in Beaufort, NC, 3 Mar (Ross McGregor); two in a field near where NC-191 crosses the French Broad River in Henderson Co, NC, 5 Apr (Marilyn Westphal); two at Tanglewood Park, Forsyth Co, NC, in early April (*vide* Phil Dickinson); one near the ferry terminal at Cedar Island, NC, 3 May (John Fussell et al.); and two feeding in fields along NC-101, N of Beaufort, NC, 22–23 May (Penny Hooper, *fide* Fussell).



**Snowy Plover:** The bird seen on Kiawah Island, SC, in late February remained until at least 20 Mar (Aaron Given).

**Semipalmated Plover:** A total of 940, an “impressive count no doubt due to the good habitat conditions”, were seen at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 8 May (Ricky Davis). Notable for its inland location was one found at the Farrington Rd WTP, during the Chapel Hill, NC, SBC, 2 May (Brian Bockhahn).

**Black-necked Stilt:** Somewhat early were four found at Santee Coastal Reserve, Georgetown Co, SC, 23 Mar (Richard & Dorothy Rosche).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** A locally unusual high count of 60 was made at the Savannah Spoil Site, 27 Apr (Steve Calver).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** An amazing high count of 3075 was made at the Savannah Spoil Site, 24 Apr (Steve Calver).

**Whimbrel:** A good count of 250+ was made on the Port Royal Sound, Hilton Head, SC, 27 Apr (David Lovett). Rare away from the immediate coast, two Whimbrels were found at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 8 May (Ricky Davis).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** One seen at Roanoke Rapids Lake, Vulture access, Northampton Co, NC, 9 May (Ricky Davis) provides a rare inland report.

**Red Knot:** Noteworthy was the large flock of 400 seen on the beach in Sunset Beach, NC, 6 May (Randy Climpson).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** Forced down by heavy rains, a migratory flock of 25+ was found in the VanWingerden fields along NC-191 in Henderson Co, NC, 24 May (Wayne Forsythe, Marilyn Westphal), providing a great count for a site in the mountains.

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** More than 30, a good count for a site in the mountains, were seen in the VanWingerden fields along NC-191 in Henderson Co, NC, 29 Mar (Marilyn Westphal) and 31 Mar (Wayne Forsythe).

**Dunlin:** A total of 1250, an “impressive number for any non-coastal site”, was seen at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 8 May (Ricky Davis). Rare in the piedmont, eight Dunlins were found at Lake Crabtree, NC, after being forced down by rain, 6 May (Joseph Covington).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** A fantastic count of 860 was made at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 2 May (Steve Calver). Also noteworthy was a count of 130 at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 8 May (Ricky Davis). This species is not usually found in such high numbers in the Carolinas.

**Ruff:** Three (!) were reported from the central South Carolina coast within a two-week period this spring. A female (Reeve) was seen in a drained impoundment at Donnelley WMA, Colleton Co, 25 Apr (multiple observers); a young male was photographed in an impoundment in Georgetown Co, 27 Apr (m. obs.); and a Reeve was seen in the same general area of Georgetown Co, 9–10 May (m. obs.). This concentration of Ruff sightings is truly remarkable for our region.

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** An amazing high count of 1591 was made at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 9 May (Steve Calver).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** High counts of this dowitcher, which is less often noted in spring than in fall, were made at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, where 599 were counted 24 Apr (Steve Calver), and at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, where at least 75 were seen 8 May (Ricky Davis).

**Wilson's Snipe:** Remaining unusually late into spring was the high number, 20, found at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 8 May (Ricky Davis).

**American Woodcock:** Several flushed in hardwood bottomlands of the Caswell Game Lands, NC, in mid-May, were "almost certainly nesting birds" (Harry LeGrand).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** A rare migrant through our region, less often noted in spring than in fall, a single Wilson's Phalarope was found at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 2 May, and two were seen there 9 May (Steve Calver).

**Red-necked Phalarope:**

Rare from-shore sightings were made of seven on the ocean beach of Core Banks, just S of Ophelia Inlet, where they were photographed 15 May (Pat Bland, Sherry White, *fide* John Fussell); and 10, eight males and two females, flying E off Long Beach, NC, 23 May (Ricky Davis). Even rarer inland sightings were made on Lake Brandt, Greensboro, NC, where a female was photographed 28 Apr (Scott DePue, Lou Skrabec); on a drained lake at Linville Land Harbor, near Linville, NC, where a female was found 17 May (Patricia Burns) and photographed 18 May (Jesse Pope); and at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, where four were seen 21 May, and eight (!) were seen 22 May (Steve Calver).



Red-necked Phalarope, 18 May 2009, near Linville, NC. Photo by Jesse Pope.

**Red Phalarope:** A very rare inland sighting was made of an individual at Lake Crabtree, NC, 29 Mar (G. Gordon Brown) and 30 Mar (Ali Iyooob).

**Laughing Gull:** One found during the Jordan Lake, NC, SBC, 3 May (Mike & Lois Schultz, *fide* Norm Budnitz) was the spring's farthest inland report.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** A first-winter bird was found amongst Ring-billed Gulls, near where a huge gull flock, including 31 of this species, was found in February, in a field along NC-97 in NE Edgecombe Co, NC, 9 Mar (Ricky Davis), providing the spring's only inland report.

**Glaucous Gull:** A first-winter bird, most likely the same bird seen here in the winter, was seen on Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 4 Mar (Nick Anich). Another first-winter bird, probably the same bird seen around Pea Island

throughout the winter, was reported in Wanchese, NC, 25 Mar (*fide* Jeff Lewis).

**Sooty Tern:** Ten were found on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 29 May (Brian Patteson), providing the spring's only report. This species is more likely to be found in late summer than any other time of the year.

**Bridled Tern:** This species was found on seven of 19 daily pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 20 May–7 June, with a one-day high count of seven on 31 May (Brian Patteson).

**Caspian Tern:** Locally unusual was one seen on Lake Julian, Buncombe Co, NC, 10 Apr (Wayne Forsythe). Up to ten, a good count for the piedmont, were seen on Lake Wheeler, NC, in mid-April (Steve Shultz).

**Black Tern:** Less often reported in spring than in fall, ten Black Terns were seen during a marine mammal survey SE of Cape Lookout, NC, 24 Apr (Ross McGregor); and 12 were first noted at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 21 May (Steve Calver).

**Roseate Tern:** One seen at the inlet in Hatteras, NC, 24 May (A. J. Knue, Doug Chapman, *fide* Ned Brinkley) provides the spring's only report of this beautiful and rare tern.

**Arctic Tern:** A total of 29 were seen on the pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 20–27 May, with sightings on seven of those eight trips, but none seen on subsequent daily trips (Brian Patteson).

**South Polar Skua:** An "epic flight" of South Polar Skuas took place off Hatteras, NC, in late May, possibly setting a new one-day high count record for the east coast of North America. On 20 May, at least 20 (!) skuas, including eight around the boat at one time, were counted during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras (Brian Patteson). Nine, still an amazing count, were seen the next day, 21 May, and 16 more were counted before the end of the month (Patteson). In South Carolina, one was seen from a boat out of Murrells Inlet, 16 May (Jack Peachey). Skuas typically migrate far out over the ocean, but strong easterly winds around 18–20 May pushed migrating skuas closer to the coast than usual.

**Pomarine Jaeger:** A rare from-shore sighting was made of two from the fishing pier in Ocean Isle, NC, 25 May (Taylor Piephoff). A total of 63 were seen from the daily pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 20 May–7 June, with sightings on 14 of 19 trips (Brian Patteson).

**Parasitic Jaeger:** One was photographed as it flew past a fishing pier on Oak Island, NC, 26 May (Harry Sell). A total of 18 were seen from the daily pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 20 May–7 June (Brian Patteson).

**Long-tailed Jaeger:** Putting on a good show off Hatteras, NC, this species was seen on every daily pelagic trip, 20–27 May, with amazing one-day totals of ten and eleven made on 21 and 22 May, respectively (Brian Patteson). In South Carolina, one was seen from a boat out of Murrells Inlet, 16 May (Jack Peachey).

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Several were heard calling in Monck's Corner, SC, 31 Mar (Dennis Forsythe), possibly indicating a new colony site for this introduced species.



**White-winged Dove:** This vagrant visited feeders on James Island, SC, for at least a week in mid-March (John Weinstein); in Morehead City, NC, for about a week in late March (Andy Haines, *fide* John Fussell); and in Florence, SC, 1 Apr (Beth Garver). One photographed at Fort Johnson on James Island, SC, 6 Apr (Billy McCord) may have been the same bird seen on the island in March.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** Interestingly, two were found in Raleigh, NC, on 9 May—one at the creek crossing on Mid Pines Rd (Steve Shultz) and the other at Schenck Forest (Josh Southern), where it was videotaped. Considering both sightings took place at around the same time, and at sites six miles apart, these sightings almost certainly involved two different birds. Other sightings included one heard on a farm in Watauga Co, NC, 14 May (Merrill Lynch); one heard at the Mile High overlook, off the BRP, during the Balsam Mountains SBC, 16 May (Bob Olthoff, Chris Bogardus, *fide* Marilyn Westphal); one heard along the Buncombe Horse Range Trail at Mt Mitchell SP, NC, during the Black Mountains SBC, 23 May (Kitti & Lee Reynolds, *fide* Westphal); one heard calling near Hamilton, Martin Co, NC, 25 May (Lynch); one near Cherry Hospital, Goldsboro, NC, 30 May (Eric Dean); and one at the entrance to Beaverdam WMA, Anderson Co, SC, 30 May (Bob & Judy Maxwell).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** A bird much more likely to be heard than seen, this species was heard in Todd, NC, at the relatively low elevation of 3200', in late March (Walton Conway); on the BRP, N of Devil's Courthouse, NC, where two were calling, 16 Apr (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey); and on Roan Mountain, NC, 12 May (Rick Knight).

**Whip-poor-will:** Somewhat early was one heard calling on Riverdale Rd, N Croatan Forest, NC, 15 Mar (Al Gamache).

**Chimney Swift:** One seen flying over NC-24, near Broad Creek, Carteret Co, NC, 21 Mar (John Fussell) provided the spring's earliest report.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** A second adult male, more likely another local winterer than an early spring arrival, joined one that had wintered in a yard in Manteo, NC, 6 Mar (Jeff Lewis). Spring arrivals first started showing up in our region on 24 Mar, with individuals seen at feeders in Ridgeway, SC (Donna Slyce) and in Raleigh, NC (Ali Iyoob).

**Rufous Hummingbird:** The adult male that wintered in a yard in Morehead City, NC, for the fourth winter in a row, was last seen 12 Apr (Carol Reigle, *fide* John Fussell).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Somewhat late was one seen in a yard on Ladies Island, Beaufort, SC, 1 May (Buddy Campbell).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** This rare transient was photographed in the wetlands at Bethabara Park, Winston-Salem, NC, 14 May (John Haire, Terri Maness) providing the spring's only report.

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** Somewhat early was one found at Mason Farm, Chapel Hill, NC, 9 Apr (Alan Kneidel).

**Alder Flycatcher:** Good counts were made around Balsam Mountain, NC, with 14 found in the Shining Rock Wilderness, during the SBC, 16 May

(*fide* Marilyn Westphal); five seen 25 May (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey); and seven counted along the Flat Laurel Creek Trail, 30 May (Westphal).

**Willow Flycatcher:**

A migrant heard calling in Mt Pleasant, SC, 16 Apr (Shawn Hayes) was both early and east of its typical range. Also somewhat east of the species' typical range were individuals, presumably migrants, heard calling at McMullen Park, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 25 Apr (John Scavetto) and 26 Apr (David and Marcia Wright); and at Mason Farm, Chapel Hill, NC, 12 May (Nathan Swick). Four were heard singing in the Concord Mills Wetlands, Cabarrus Co,



Willow Flycatcher, 31 May 2009, Concord Mills Wetland, Cabarrus Co., NC. Photo by Jeff Lemons.

NC, at a site where this species had nested before, in May (Taylor Piephoff, Jeff Lemons). One, seemingly on territory though a nest was not located, was seen at Civitan Park, Winston-Salem, NC, at about the easternmost limit of the species' breeding range, 10 May through the end of the period (John Haire).

**Eastern Kingbird:** Early spring arrivals were found on 20 Mar at Lake Waccamaw SP, Columbus Co, NC (Chris Helms) and at Cowan's Ford WR, NW Mecklenburg Co, NC (Tomm Lorenzin).

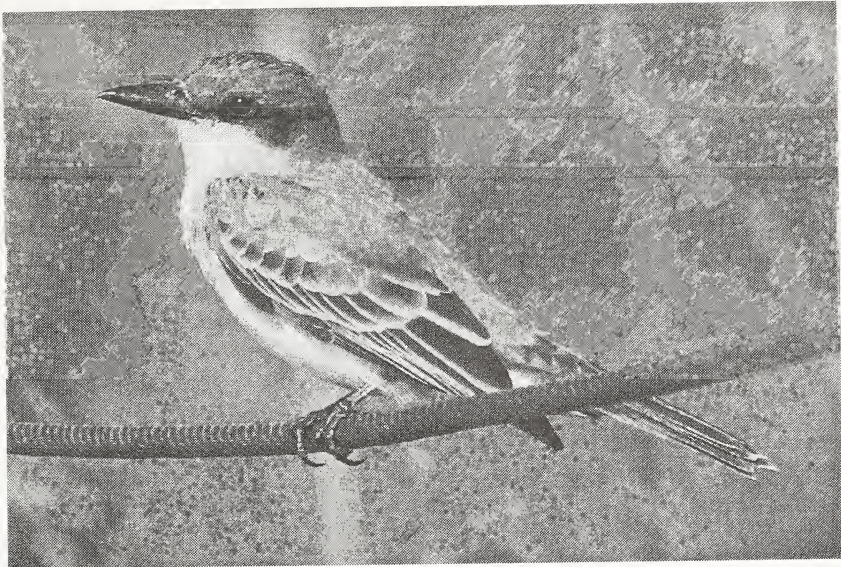
**Gray Kingbird:** Three (!) were seen along the North Carolina coast this spring—near the ferry terminal on Ocracoke Island, NC, 24 Apr (Sidney Maddock, Marcia Lyons, *fide* Jeff Lewis) through 28 Apr (Harry Sell); at the ferry terminal at Ft Fisher, NC, 14 May (Bruce Smithson, Amy Williamson, et al.); and on a powerline near the end of Shepherd Rd, just N of Southport, NC, 23 May (Ricky Davis).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** Two, apparently nesting in the area, were found singing in the Caswell Game Land, near Frogsboro, NC, 18 May (Harry LeGrand). This piedmont location is east of this species' typical breeding range.

**Warbling Vireo:** One heard singing in Leland, NC, 11 Apr (Greg Massey) was both unusually early and east of its typical range. One found along the Haw River where it meets US-64, in Chatham Co, NC, 3 May (Ricky Davis) was probably a migrant, though the habitat looked appropriate for nesting. A pair was found along Salem Creek at Civitan Park, Winston-



Salem, NC, 26 Apr, near where a pair nested last season (John Haire). Since then, two more singing males have been seen in the park and a nest has been located (Haire). A pair returned, for the fourth straight year, to the wetland forest near Concord Mills in Cabarrus Co, NC, 12 May (Taylor Piephoff, Jeff Lemons). One heard singing at a traditional nesting site at Anilorac Farms, Orange Co, NC, 14 May (Alan Kneidel) through 17 May (Jacob Socolar) must not have stuck around, as the bird was not noted during subsequent visits to the site by birders.



Gray Kingbird, 25 April 2009, Ocracoke, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

**Philadelphia Vireo:** One heard singing along Swift Creek, Raleigh, NC, during the SBC, 9 May (John Connors) was an excellent find for the season and the only one noted this spring.

**Fish Crow:** Continuing their western expansion in our region, eight Fish Crows were noted at Fletcher Park, Henderson Co, NC, 12 May (Simon Thompson).

**Common Raven:** Sightings away from the mountains were made of individuals over US-1, about three miles N of its intersection with US-15-501, in Lee Co, in early April (Parker Backstrom); at Penny's Bend on the Eno River in Durham Co, NC, 11 Apr (Will Cook); in Bahama, NC, 15 Apr (Tom Krakauer); and just S of Dairyland Rd in Orange Co, NC, 3 May (Ricky Davis).

**Tree Swallow:** A nest was found at Bethabara Park in Winston-Salem, NC, 25 May, providing one of the easternmost nesting records for the state. (John Haire, Terri Maness).

**Cliff Swallow:** A good count of 75 was made around a nesting site at Falls Dam, Falls Lake, NC, 17 Apr (Matt Daw). Seventeen, a good count for the area, were found nesting on two bridges over the New River in



Jacksonville, NC, 9 May (Buddy Garrett). Four, apparently nesting, were seen flying around the ferry terminal at Minnesott Beach, NC, a previously unknown nesting site, 16 May (John Fussell).

**House Wren:** “An apparent explosion” of breeding by this species occurred in Moore Co, NC, this spring, with up to 20 nest sites being found, up from two last year, and only one in prior years (Susan Campbell, David Kilpatrick).

**Sedge Wren:** Three, a good one-day count for a site in the mountains, were seen in the French Broad River floodplain in Henderson Co, NC, 2 May (Marilyn Westphal).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** One found on Roanoke Island, NC, 29 Apr (Jeff Lewis) was somewhat late.

**Cedar Waxwing:** Remaining from the large influx of waxwings into the Carolinas this winter were “hundreds” in a yard in Mooresville, NC, on the somewhat late date of 1 May (Tomm Lorenzin).

**Blue-winged Warbler:** One found near the Carmichael Bridge, just W of Little Pee Dee SP, Dillon Co, SC, 7 Apr (Shawn Hayes) was very early. One seen at Deep Gap, Ashe Co, NC, 22 May into June (Curtis Smalling) suggests attempted breeding by the species in that area.

**“Brewster’s Warbler”:** This hybrid was found at four different locations in the NC mountains this spring. A male, “singing Golden-winged Warbler type 1 song,” was found in Shady Grove, NC, 8 May (Chris Kelly, Curtis Smalling). Another male was seen several times near Creston, Ashe Co, NC, 15 May through the end of the period (Kim Brand, Ron Morris, *fide* Smalling). Two were found at different locations in Haywood Co, NC, on 25 May—one along Max Patch Rd and the other along Cold Springs Rd (Joe Kegley).

**“Lawrence’s Warbler”:** This rare hybrid was a quite unexpected find on the Chapel Hill, NC, SBC, May 2, when a male was found atop a small pine tree at Finley Golf Course (Carol Williamson). This sighting provides the first record of this hybrid in Orange County, NC.

**Tennessee Warbler:** One found at Landsford Canal SP, SC, 12 May (Tomm Lorenzin) was a good find for the spring season, especially for a site outside the mountains.

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** In the mountains, where this species is not known to winter and is only an uncommon migrant, individuals were seen at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, 18 Apr (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey) and 19 Apr (Jon & Glenda Smith) and at Stecoah Gap, Graham Co, NC, 27 Apr (Simon Thompson).

**Nashville Warbler:** One found along a clear-cut on the W side of Lake Crabtree, NC, 30 Mar (Ali Iyooob) was either a very rare wintering bird or an extremely early migrant, and in either case quite noteworthy. Interestingly, two were found in Greensboro, NC, on 23 Apr—one singing in a backyard (Henry Link) and another photographed at the Bog Garden, where it was seen again 24 Apr (Melissa Whitmire, *fide* Link). Other migrants found outside the mountains included individuals at Sandling Beach, Falls Lake,

NC, during the SBC, 29 Apr (*fide* Brian Bockhahn); at Landsford Canal SP, SC, 12 May (Tomm Lorenzin); and in a yard in Bahama, NC, where it was “actively singing” 19 May (Tom Krakauer).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** Migrants found away the mountains, where they are less often noted in spring than in fall, included individuals at Lake Conestee, Greenville, SC, 18 Apr (*fide* Paul Serridge); in Latta Park, Charlotte, NC, 25 Apr (Ron Clark); and just S of Siler City, NC, 1 May (Kevin Caldwell). The very high count, 348, made on the Balsam Mountain, NC, SBC, 16 May, is possibly related to the increase in open habitat caused by the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (*fide* Marilyn Westphal).

**Magnolia Warbler:** Migrants found away the mountains, where they are uncommon-to-rare in spring, included one at Jordan Lake, NC, 23 Apr (Phil Warren); two at Pee Dee NWR, NC, 10 May (Michael McCloy); and one in a yard near Falls Lake, NC, 12 May (Brian Pendergraft). One seen on Roanoke Island, NC, 27 May (Jeff Lewis) was both quite late and unusually near the coast for a spring migrant.

**Cape May Warbler:** Migrants found in eastern half of the Carolinas, where they are uncommon-to-rare during spring migration, included one singing on Daniel Island, SC, somewhat early, 15 Apr (Shawn Hayes); one at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 24 Apr (Steve Calver); one at Jordan Lake, NC, found during the SBC, 3 May (Andy Upshaw, Rouse Wilson, *fide* Norm Budnitz); two in Onslow Co, NC, responding to a recording during the SBC, 9 May (Bruce Smithson, Amy Williamson, *fide* Andy Webb); and one along the Neuse River in Wake Co, NC, somewhat late, 21 May (Ali Iyoob).

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** One found along the Neuse River in Wake Co, NC, 16 May (Ali Iyoob) was locally unusual for the spring season.

**Blackburnian Warbler:** One found at Balsam Mountain Preserve, E of Sylva, NC, 5 Apr (Blair Ogburn) was somewhat early. One found along the Neuse River in Wake Co, NC, 19 May (Ali Iyoob) provides the spring’s easternmost report.

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** One of the rarer spring migrants, individuals of this species were seen outside the mountains in Winston-Salem, NC, 1 May (John Haire, Terri Maness); just S of Siler City, NC, 1 May (Kevin Caldwell); and along the Neuse River in Wake Co, NC, 8 May (Matt Daw). In the mountains, four were seen in the easternmost section of the Balsam Mountains SBC area, 16 May (Gail & Herman Lankford, Len Pardue, *fide* Marilyn Westphal), providing a good count for the spring season.

**Cerulean Warbler:** In the piedmont, where this species is a rare migrant, sightings included two males at Saluda Shoals Park, Irmo, SC, 17 Apr (Patricia Voelker); an adult male singing in the far NE corner of Reynolda Gardens, Winston-Salem, NC, 20 Apr (John Haire); one in a yard in Cornelius, NC, 26 Apr (David Wright, Taylor Piephoff); and one at Landsford Canal SP, SC, 12 May (Tomm Lorenzin). In the mountains, where this species is a localized breeder, impressive counts were made of 15 along the BRP between mile marker 376.2 and Lane Pinnacle overlook, 29

Apr (Charlotte Goedsche, Marilyn Westphal) and 11 in atypical xeric oak/hickory forest habitat in the Cheoah/Yellow Creek Mountains, S of Fontana, NC, in mid-May (Kevin Caldwell).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** “Not unusual for the location but noteworthy because of their sheer abundance” was the 67 recorded on the Milltail Creek BBS route at Alligator River NWR, NC, 24 May (Merrill Lynch).

**Worm-eating Warbler:** One found near the Carmichael Bridge, just W of Little Pee Dee SP, Dillon Co, SC, 7 Apr (Shawn Hayes) was somewhat early.

**Swainson’s Warbler:** Locally unusual was a migrant found in S Mecklenburg Co, NC, 19 Apr (Ron Clark). Reports of birds on territory included two at Howell Woods, Johnston Co, NC, 20 Apr (Clyde Sorenson, Phil Doerr); one along James Creek in Weymouth Woods, Southern Pines, NC, 21 Apr, “for the first time in probably six years” (Susan Campbell); 21 singing males on a 13 mile stretch of the Roanoke River between and Palmyra and Hamilton, NC, 2–4 May (Frank Enders); two at Webb Wildlife Center, Hampton Co, SC, 3 May (Carroll Richard); and three at Congaree NP, SC, 24 May (John Grego).

**Ovenbird:** The seed-eating Ovenbird that wintered in a yard in Manteo, NC, remained until 25 Mar (Jeff Lewis). One found at Holly Shelter Game Land SP, 28 Mar (Bruce Smithson) was slightly early.

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** Two different territorial males were seen and heard around Havelock, NC, from early April until the end of the period (John Fussell). This location is at the eastern edge of this species’ typical breeding range.

**Kentucky Warbler:** Locally rare was a migrant found in the Elizabethan Gardens, Manteo, NC, 20 Apr (Jeff Lewis). Nineteen singing males provided a good count for a 13-mile stretch of the Roanoke River between Palmyra and Hamilton, NC, 2–4 May (Frank Enders).

**Connecticut Warbler:** A female was well-observed “for 1–2 minutes on or near the ground” in a hemlock forest opening caused by a Woolly Adelgid infestation at the Walhalla Fish Hatchery on the E Fork of the Chattooga River, SC, at about 2500’, during a Carolina Bird Club field trip, 2 May (Marion Clark et al.). Also, one was heard singing at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, 13 May, (Ron Selvey) but was not seen.

**Mourning Warbler:** Providing this spring’s only report, one was found singing inside the thickets along the Loop Boardwalk at the Bog Garden in Greensboro, NC, 30 May, where it was also photographed (Henry Link, Lou Skrabec, et al.). Attempts to relocate the bird the following day were unsuccessful.

**Wilson’s Warbler:** Sightings of this uncommon migrant included a male singing at Hamilton Lakes Park, Greensboro, NC, 16 Apr (Henry & Elizabeth Link, George Wheaton, Lou Skrabec); one singing at Reynolda Gardens, Winston-Salem, NC, 23 Apr (Phil Dickinson et al.); one at the Methodist Children’s Home in Winston-Salem, NC, 1 May (John Haire,



Terri Maness) and again during the Forsyth Co SBC, 2 May (*vide* Haire); and a male along the drainage canal at Mason Farm, Chapel Hill, NC, 10 May (Kent Fiala) and again 12 May (Nathan Swick).

**Canada Warbler:** Uncommon-to-rare east of the mountains, a male Canada Warbler was photographed in Warren Co, NC, in early May (Paul Scharf).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** The bird that wintered along Leggett Rd, just E of Rocky Mount, NC, was last seen 19 Mar (Ricky Davis). Also, one passed through the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 9 May (Steve Calver).

**Vesper Sparrow:** This spring's sightings included 12 at Santee Cooper WMA, Eutawville, SC, 4 Mar (Richard & Dorothy Rosche); one on the lawn of the WTP on NC-191, Henderson Co, NC, 22 Mar (Marilyn Westphal, Wayne Forsythe); one just N of Rocky Mount, NC, 24 Mar (Ricky Davis); "some" at the recreation park in Black Mountain, NC, 25–26 Mar (Stu Gibeau); one or two along Mid Pines Rd in Raleigh, NC, 5 Apr (Harry LeGrand); two at Mason Farm, Chapel Hill, NC, 9 Apr (Alan Kneidel); and one at Horseshoe Farm Park, NE Raleigh, NC, 10 Apr (John Connors).

**Lark Sparrow:** One found at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, 9 Apr (Ron Selvey) and later photographed (Wayne Forsythe) provides the third record for that species in Henderson County, NC.

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** One found singing on the mainland of Currituck Co, NC, during a breeding bird survey (BBS), 29 May (Jeff Lewis) suggests possible breeding by the species in that area.

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** Only two were mentioned this spring—one at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 10 Apr (Steve Calver) and one, a somewhat late migrant, at Reynolda Gardens, Winston-Salem, NC, 8 May (John Haire).

**Swamp Sparrow:** Somewhat late were individuals along the Neuse River in Wake Co, NC, 7 May (Ali Iyob) and at Pee Dee NWR, NC, 10 May (Michael McCloy).

**White-crowned Sparrow:** Noteworthy sightings of this uncommon sparrow included three, one adult and two juveniles, along Shepherd Rd near Southport, NC, 8 Mar (John Ennis); five at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, continuing from winter until 24 Apr (Steve Calver); and one at Savannah NWR, Jasper Co, SC, 25 Apr (Carroll Richard).

**Snow Bunting:** An adult male was seen just below the rocky summit of Snake Mountain, at 5500', Watauga Co, NC, 8 Mar (Brian Bockhahn), providing a rare spring report of this vagrant from the north.

**Summer Tanager:** The female that wintered in a yard in Wilmington, NC, continued until at least 30 Mar (Amy Williamson).

**Blue Grosbeak:** Somewhat early arrivals were noted in Meggett, SC, 6 Apr (Dan & Cherrie Sneed) and in Hendersonville, NC, 10 Apr (Wayne Forsythe).

**Painted Bunting:** A banded male returned, somewhat early, to a yard for a third summer on Ladies Island, Beaufort, SC, 4 Apr (Buddy Campbell) where, also, a banded female has wintered for three straight winters. This

species returned with a bang to the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 24 Apr, when a count of 41 provided the site's first spring sighting and its spring high count. (Steve Calver). Calver also notes that, into summer, numbers of Painted Buntings at this site were the "highest I've seen lately." A female photographed on Roanoke Island, 9 May (Jeff Lewis) was a locally rare find, as this location is north of this species' typical range.

**Dickcissel:** This spring, birders made multiple sightings of this erratic wanderer across our region. Yet another Dickcissel visited a feeder in the yard of Sharon & Phil Turner in Myrtle Beach, SC, 21 Mar (Turner). A male discovered at Anilorac Farm, W of Chapel Hill, NC, 8 May (Derb Carter) was joined by at least five other birds by 16 May (Kent Fiala), for a total of four singing males and two females. Though one might expect breeding at that site, subsequent visits by birders in June found no Dickcissels at the site, possibly due to cutting of the



Dickcissel, 16 May 2009, Anilorac Farm, NC. Photo by Kent Fiala.

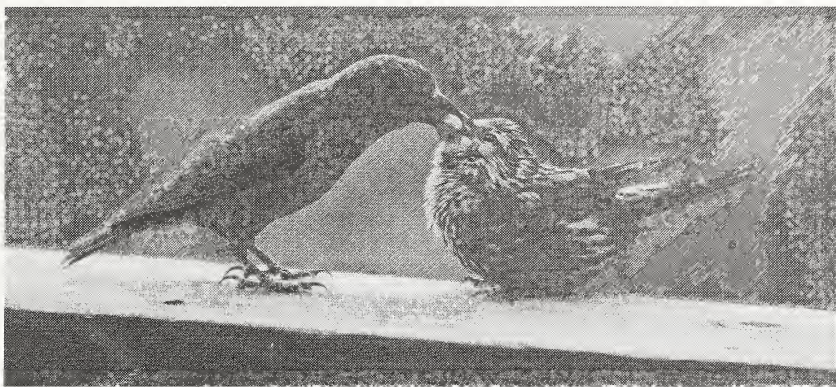
species' favored grassy fields. A high count of seven was made at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 10 May (John Fussell et al.). Three, two males and one female were seen in a field near Cherry Hospital, Goldsboro, NC, 23 May through the end of the period (Eric Dean). A singing male was found along T Lewis Rd in Stanly Co, NC, during a BBS, 25 May (Alex Kneidel, Ken Kneidel). One, presumably a late migrant, was seen on Roanoke Island, NC, 28 May (Jeff Lewis). A singing male was found at Dobbins Cattle Farm, Townville, SC, 30 May (Bob & Judy Maxwell).

**Bobolink:** A flock of 75, a good count for the mountains, was found in the Warren Wilson section of Swannanoa, NC, during the Buncombe Co SBC, 4 May (*fide* Marilyn Westphal). One found at Dobbins Cattle Farm, Townville, SC, 30 May (Bob & Judy Maxwell) was somewhat late.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Two were reported this spring—one at Estherville Plantation, Georgetown Co, SC, 4 Apr (Bob & Judy Maxwell) and an adult male at a feeder in Wilmington, NC, 8 Apr (Linda Losche).

**Red Crossbill:** There seemed to be a higher-than-usual number of Red Crossbill sightings this spring. Eight to ten were reported at a feeder in N Chatham Co, NC, 19 Mar (Reggie Cockman, *fide* Andy Upshaw). A pair visited feeders on Swiss Pine Lake, near Spruce Pine, NC, 20–28 Apr

(Valerie Crabill et al.). Five flew over Stecoah Gap, NC, 24 Apr (Simon Thompson). Up to seven visited feeders at Snowbird Lodge, Robbinsville, NC, in late April (Thompson). Eight were counted at Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC, during the Buncombe Co SBC, 4 May (*fide* Marilyn Westphal). Two visited a feeder just outside Brevard, NC, elevation 2200', 5–6 May (Tom Joyce). Two adults were photographed feeding two fledglings in the Connestee Falls community of Brevard, NC, 12 May (Carolyn Powell), providing rare breeding documentation for this species in the Carolinas. A dozen flew over the Flat Laurel Creek Trail on Balsam Mountain, NC, 30 May (Westphal). A flock of 20 was found at Milepost 355 on the BRP, and nine at the Ranger Station at nearby Mt Mitchell, NC, 31 May (Westphal).



Red Crossbills, 12 May 2009, Brevard, NC. Photo by Carolyn Powell.

**Pine Siskin:** Following the record irruption into the Carolinas this winter, large numbers of siskins continued to be seen into spring. A “flock of thousands” was reported feeding at Howell Woods, Johnston Co, NC, in early March (Kurt Barnhart). Somewhat late to depart were eight at a feeder in Kernersville, NC, 2 May (*fide* Haire); one in Hampton Co, SC, 7 May (Carroll Richard); and four at a feeder in N Raleigh, NC, 15 May (Ali Iyooob). Remarkably, two adults were discovered feeding two fledglings at Durant Nature Park, Raleigh, NC, in a stand of Shortleaf Pines adjacent to the Training Lodge, on the N side of the park, 30 May (John Connors, *fide* Clyde Smith). A report of this species breeding outside of the mountains is practically unheard of in the Carolinas.

**Lesser Goldfinch:** Possibly the most exciting find this spring was that of an adult male Lesser Goldfinch, of the “Texas” or “Black-backed” race, on a feeder in Beaufort, NC, 2 Mar (Ross McGregor). The bird was photographed and seen by many in the following couple of days, though it followed no routine schedule, being absent for hours only to reappear later. The last sighting was made in the late afternoon of 4 Mar (McGregor). This sighting provides the second record of this species for the state, and the first of the “Texas/Black-backed” race.





Great Crested Flycatcher, 10 July 2009, Edisto Beach, South Carolina. Photo by Steve Kilpatrick.

# CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

[www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org)

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

Membership is open to all persons interested in the conservation, natural history, and study of wildlife with particular emphasis on birds. Dues, contributions, and bequests to the Club may be deductible from state and federal income and estate taxes. Make checks payable to Carolina Bird Club, Inc. Send checks or correspondence regarding membership or change of address to the Headquarters Secretary. Dues include \$4 for a subscription to the *CBC Newsletter* and \$5 for a subscription to *The Chat*. Associate members do not receive a separate subscription to publications.

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Associate (in same household as individual member).....	\$5.00
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Sustaining (open to businesses) .....	\$25.00
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# The Chat

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# THE CHAT

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Cover: Clapper Rail, 21 May 2009, Huntington Beach State Park, SC. Photo by Jerry Kerschner.

# Age- and Sex-Biased Distribution of Northern Harriers (*Circus cyaneus*) in the North Carolina Coastal Plain

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David S. Lee

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Surprisingly little has been published concerning Northern Harriers (*Circus cyaneus*) in the Carolinas. For the most part these raptors breed north of the Carolinas, and here and elsewhere in the southeast they are primarily seasonal transients and winter visitors. Potter et al. (2006) regard Northern Harriers (hereafter “harriers”) as winter residents throughout the Carolinas, uncommon over most inland counties and common over coastal marshes and agricultural fields. There are several reports of breeding in the Carolinas, but these are sporadic isolated events. Pearson et al. (1942) documented nesting in 1936 on Hatteras Island, and Smithwick (1952) reported a nest in 1891 in Bertie County. Additionally, pairs noted in June at Cedar and Ocracoke Islands are presumed to have been nesting (F. Parnell, pers. comm.). Lee and Irvin (1988) reported on an additional nesting and summarized the known breeding status of harriers in North Carolina. In South Carolina there is a single reported 1914 nest from Caper’s Island (Post and Gauthreaux 1989). In this note I discuss a previously unreported ecological and geographical segregation by age and sex of wintering adult harriers.

## Migration

Migration is protracted in both the spring and fall. It extends from February to May in the spring and from mid-August through late November (MacWhirter and Bildstein 1996) in the fall. Lee and Lee (1978) studied fall hawk migration over North Carolina’s Outer Banks between 1975 and 1977. *Accipiters* (87%) and falcons (10%) made up the bulk of September and October’s diurnal raptor migrants. Of the over 4000 migrant hawks tallied, only 1.96% were harriers. While most individuals were obviously transients, foraging as they moved southward, based on behavior some had apparently taken up winter residence by early fall. Of the individuals where plumage was noted (n=132) only 10.6% of the Outer Banks’ migrants were adult males [see discussion on plumage below] (Lee unpublished). There is also a single North Carolina report of a fall harrier migrating at sea (Lee and Horner 1989). Laurie, et al. (1981) studied autumn hawk migrations at Ft. Johnson, Charleston, South Carolina. Of 1764 raptors they recorded between early September and early November 1980, harriers made up 8.9% of their total, but they did not provide breakdowns in age or sex based on plumage.



### **Winter Distribution in North Carolina**

Because of the extended periods of both spring and fall migration, information presented here on winter distribution is limited to observations made during the months of December and January, although the same general patterns discussed here are also apparent during the migratory seasons.

Distinguishing adult males from females and juveniles is easy because of the adult male's distinctive grayish upper and white ventral surfaces and dark wing-tips. While birds in juvenal plumages can be distinguished from adult females by their cinnamon under-parts and lack of streaking on their flanks, and while juvenile males can be told from females of any age by their smaller size, these criteria were not used in this study. Many individuals were seen at distances, in bad light, without optical aid, and from moving vehicles. All observations were of birds in flight. Thus, while a number of birds were identified as juveniles, the observations for the most part were tallied as either adult male or as female/juvenile birds.

Because of my earlier experiences on the Outer Banks where I saw mostly adult female or juvenile harriers in both migration and winter, I became surprised that adult males were much more common at inland sites in North Carolina than along the coast. This finding was based on over 100 personal random encounters of wintering harriers in eastern inland North Carolina in December and January between 1990 and 2005. In the winters of 2006–2007 and 2007–2008 I kept more complete records and encountered 49 harriers (where plumage was noted) in the inland southeastern portion of the state. These were mostly birds seen while driving to various local destinations and not on dedicated census routes. Because of the patchy nature of the habitat in relation to the roads traveled, no attempt was made to determine bird densities. The sightings were made in Bladen, Cumberland, Hoke, Johnston, Roberson, and Sampson Counties. Of the 49 sightings, 45 (91.9%) were adult males. Of the four brown-plumaged birds, one was in juvenal plumage (22 Dec. 2007, Bladen Co.). The other three were not seen well enough to determine if they were adult females or juveniles. During the same time period, random road surveys on the Outer Banks, Cedar Island, and Topsail Island (Carteret, Dare, Hyde, and Onslow Counties) yielded 37 sightings of individuals of which 34 were adult females or juveniles of unknown sex (91.9%). I was unable to determine what percentage of the non-adult males were juvenile birds.

Because some of the same roads were driven frequently both within a single winter and on subsequent winters, there is the likelihood that a number of these sightings were of the same individuals. However, there is no documentation that individual birds have site fidelity to their winter ranges in subsequent years (MacWhirter and Bildstein 1996). Wintering males in California were shown to be occupying significantly larger hunting ranges than females (*ibid.*), and it is not clear how individual harriers are using the patchy agricultural landscape in the inland North Carolina sites.

While the food preferences of wintering harriers have not been studied in North Carolina *per se*, the proportions of passerine birds in the diets of harriers wintering in the south is known to be higher than it is in those wintering to our north (MacWhirter and Bildstein 1996). The primary coastal foraging areas for wintering harriers are salt marshes and inter-dune areas of barrier islands. In these habitats the likely mammalian prey species are least shrews (*Cryptotis parva*), meadow voles (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*), house mice (*Mus musculus*), eastern cottontails (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), and rice rats (*Oryzomys palustris*). At inland sites most winter foraging is over fields cleared of the previous season's crops, short grass pastures, and abandoned fields in early seral stages. Small mammals associated with open agricultural lands and early successional fields in the coastal plain include southeastern shrews (*Sorex longirostris*), harvest mice (*Reithrodontomys humulus*), white-footed mice (*Peromyscus leucopus*), cotton rats (*Sigmodon hispidus*), and house mice (Lee and Clark 1982).

Of course, if all the harriers were randomly distributed during the wintering and migratory periods there would not be a 50/50 ratio of gray/brown individuals. If all nests were successful and all young-of-the-year birds survived, the ratio of gray- (adult males) to brown-plumaged (adult females and young of the year) individuals would be about 1:5. However, this is not the case. While harriers produce an average of 4.4 eggs per nest, the number of young fledged averages 1.8 birds per nest and first-year mortality is 59%. Adult annual mortality is 30% (Bildstein 1988, MacWhirter and Bildstein 1996). In that winter surveys would represent only half a year subsequent to nesting, I adjusted the annual mortality to 29.5% for first-year birds and 15% for adults to estimate that adult male-plumaged birds should represent about 21.32% of the total wintering population. A Chi-square test on the coastal birds just rejects ( $P=.0497$ ) the null hypothesis that the gray bird/brown bird ratio matches the predicted overall population ratio, while the inland ratio is very different from the expected ( $P < 0.0001$ ).

## Discussion

The local differential wintering habits of male and female harriers appear to be driven by a combination of morphological and behavioral differences as they relate to broad-scale landscape ecology and to responses of the local available prey base to variations in available wintering habitat of inland vs. coastal sites.

Adult males are 8–11% smaller (wing chord measurement) and weigh 29–35% less than adult females (Bildstein 1988). This size dimorphism would seemingly influence the type and size of prey items. It is known, for example, that males take more birds than females. There are additional ecological and behavioral differences in the ways the two sexes use the landscape and its resources. Males prefer habitats that are more open than those occupied by females, apparently because of prey preferences, and have smaller home ranges. Additionally, females exclude males from their preferred winter hunting habitats (Bildstein 1987, Temeles 1987). Distinct

feeding, foraging, and habitat preferences (Temeles 1986), in turn, are likely, in combination, to drive the differences responsible for wintering females to select natural coastal communities and males to use more inland agricultural sites. Based on the small percentage of adult males observed in migration along the state's Outer Banks (Lee unpublished) these same factors appear also to influence the fall migratory routes of harriers.

These conclusions raise the obvious question as to the distribution of wintering male harriers in North Carolina prior to Colonial agriculture. Skinner (1928) notes the use of very open shrub and oak barrens in North Carolina's sandhills. An accompanying photograph of this habitat shows these "barrens" to be open, apparently cut over, longleaf pine wiregrass communities. Prior to the time of European contact, natural open habitats suitable for inland foraging harriers would have been limited primarily to fire-maintained longleaf pine savannas. A more detailed survey of harriers in coastal habitats during December and January is needed to determine what percentage of the wintering harriers are juvenile birds. While it is clear that the inland wintering population almost exclusively comprises adult males, the coastal population could be mostly juveniles, adult females or some combination of both. There is a general pattern in some migrant raptors and other birds for adult females, males and/or juveniles to migrate at different times or to different destinations. In Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) there are male-female differences in timing of migration, distance traveled, and wintering sites, and pairs did not migrate or winter together (Martell et al. 2001). In Florida juvenile Broad-winged Hawks (*Buteo platypterus*) winter further south than adults, but this is not true for other portions of the species' wintering range (Tabb 1973). Stotz and Goodrich (1989) showed a bimodal fall migration in American Kestrels (*Falco sparverius*), with the median date of females preceding males by 11 days. Therefore it is not surprising to learn that harriers have sex/age-biased migratory behaviors and distributions. In that some harriers breed in their first year (5–23%; Hamerstrom et al. 1985, MacWhirter and Bildstein 1996), adults and juveniles wintering at different distances from nesting locations may not be as strong a tendency as in birds having a longer period of adolescence. Requesting participants and organizers of Christmas Bird Counts to record the sexes and ages (based on plumage) of wintering harriers would quickly provide a better understanding of regional distributional age and sex biases of these birds.

Despite the limits of my methodology in this survey, there is a clear, previously unreported, sexual bias in the winter distribution of adult male harriers when coastal (8.1% adult male) and inland (<90% adult male) communities are compared. There is a less than 10% overlap between adult males and females/juveniles at inland sites, and a similar bias between females/juveniles and adult males in coastal habitats. Based on information I collected in the mid-1970s it appears that a similar bias also exists in the distribution of coastal fall migrants (10.6% adult males). It is interesting that these distributional biases have not been suggested for other regions in this hawk's wintering range. A casual census of wintering harriers in



southeastern Arizona indicates less than 30% of birds I observed (N=42+; 2006–2008, pers. obs.) are in adult male plumage, a percentage approximate to what one would expect if adult males, females, and the surviving previous season's young were evenly represented.

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## Fifty Years Ago in *The Chat*—December 1959

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The lead article, “The Amateur and the Study of Bird Behavior” by Andrew J. Meyerriecks discussed things that are unknown about bird behavior and ways in which amateurs could contribute to knowledge about those behaviors. This article could probably be republished essentially unchanged today.

In General Field Notes, Ernest Cutts reported on species nesting in the Drum Island, SC, heron colony. Total adult population was estimated at 10,000 birds. E. Burnham Chamberlain reported that Ruddy Ducks with young had been seen at Bear Island, SC, and at the Romain Wildlife Refuge, SC, in the summer of 1959. Wendell P. Smith reported seeing a Black Rail feigning injury (taken to be evidence of breeding) in Surry County, NC, on 6 July 1959. The editor noted that in its 23 years, *The Chat* had published only two NC records and one SC record of Black Rail. John H. Grey belatedly reported June 1951 observations by Robert Paxton of Black-necked Stilts at Bodie Island, NC. The editor noted that while this was a rare observation in 1951, stilts had since become more numerous. Grey also reported a 1941 observation by Ray J. Beasley of 10–15 Common Ground-Doves on Knott’s Island, NC. George Smith detailed an observation of Sprague’s Pipit near Chapel Hill, NC, an observation that was later designated an “unaccepted sighting” by the NC Bird Records Committee. A total of 150 Wood Storks were noted at Savannah Refuge on 10 June, “the largest concentration ever noted” there. —Kent Fiala

# Distribution of King and Clapper Rails in Managed Impoundments and Tidal Marshes of South Carolina

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## Introduction

King (*Rallus elegans*) and Clapper (*R. longirostris*) Rails are marsh-dwelling birds present in South Carolina's fresh to saline coastal habitats. King Rails in the South Atlantic Coastal Zone (SACZ) are considered the only non-migratory King Rails in the U.S. (Meanley 1992). Thirteen states, comprising most of the migratory range of the King Rail, list the King Rail as threatened or endangered (Cooper 2006). Eight subspecies of the Clapper Rail occur within marshes of the Atlantic (Cumbee 2003) and Gulf Coasts, as well as California's coastal marshes (Zembel et al. 1989, Eddleman and Conway 1994). One subspecies of Clapper Rail occurs in Arizona's freshwater marsh. All subspecies, except the Northern Clapper Rail (*R. l. crepitans*), are non-migratory (Eddleman and Conway 1994).

King Rails are associated with freshwater and brackish marshes, while Clapper Rails use brackish and saline marshes (Meanley 1992; Eddleman and Conway 1998). Because of their exclusive use of marshes and selection of invertebrate prey, rails are good indicators of marsh health (Gaines et al. 2003). Regrettably, the marsh habitat upon which rails rely has been lost or degraded by direct and indirect factors. Only 12% of the area of the United States remains in wetlands (Zedler and Kercher 2005). The estimated wetland loss between 1986 and 1997 averaged 23,674 ha annually; 5848 ha of this annual loss were estuarine, emergent wetlands (Dahl 2000). Rail populations appear to be suffering as a consequence of wetland loss and degradation (Eddleman et al. 1988; Eddleman and Conway 1998).

In South Carolina, approximately 28,522 ha of coastal wetlands are managed as impoundments (Gordon et al. 1989). These impoundments were created during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for rice and indigo production (Epstein and Joyner 1988). Wooden water control structures called ricefield trunks were used to manage the hydrology of coastal impoundments by controlling flooding and drying cycles, and water movement within impoundments (Morgan et al. 1975). South Carolina's rice



production decreased significantly during the late 1800s after the Civil War and loss of slave labor, increased competition from Louisiana and Texas rice production, and a series of damaging hurricanes (Morgan et al. 1975). Subsequently, many rice plantations were managed by new owners for wintering waterfowl to enhance hunting and other recreational activities (Epstein and Joyner 1988).

These managed wetlands of the SACZ may provide important habitat for King and Clapper Rails; however, the primary focus of management is to provide habitat for migrating and wintering waterfowl (Epstein and Joyner 1988). We do not know to what extent rails use these marshes because few studies (Rundle and Fredrickson 1981; Epstein and Joyner 1988; Tori et al. 2002) have examined the effects of waterfowl management strategies on rail use of these wetlands (Dodd et al. 1999). With the loss of natural wetlands, however, managed marshes may provide additional habitat for rails and other marsh-dwelling species.

Few habitat selection and movement studies have been conducted on King Rails, and many such studies on Clapper Rails focused on the endangered subspecies (Conway 1990; Hinojosa et al. 2002) in the western United States. We examined habitat selection and movement, and estimated home range sizes, of King and Clapper Rails relative to managed impoundments and tidal marshes using radio-telemetry during the breeding season. We suspected habitat selection and movements of King and Clapper Rails would be restricted to tidal marshes. Furthermore, we expected that King Rails would use fresh to brackish marshes and Clapper Rails would use brackish to saline marshes. This work addressed gaps in data concerning rail ecology and biology in the SACZ and assessed the feasibility of trapping and radio-marking rails in the South Atlantic coastal marsh.

## Study Area

We conducted our study within two managed properties, the Ernest F. Hollings Ashepoo-Combahee-Edisto (ACE) Basin National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) and Nemours Plantation (Nemours) in Beaufort County, South Carolina. The 4781-ha Refuge includes 1598 ha of tidal marsh and 1214 ha of managed wetland impoundments. It is divided into the Edisto River Unit and Combahee River Unit. We selected the 1847-ha Combahee River Unit because of its proximity to Nemours and because both it and Nemours are within the Combahee River watershed.

Nemours is south of the Refuge and includes 3881 ha of diverse habitats, including 607 ha of remnant ricefields, now managed for waterfowl, and 115 ha of tidal saline and brackish marshes. Marshes were dominated by *Spartina cynosuroides*, *S. alterniflora*, and *Juncus roemerianus*. The Combahee River flows through the Refuge and Nemours to St. Helena Sound where all three rivers of the ACE Basin meet and converge with the Atlantic Ocean.

We trapped rails in three managed impoundments at the Refuge, and three tidal marshes each at the Refuge and Nemours. We selected trap sites

that were large enough for the trap line, and in marshes where we heard or saw rails.

## Methods

**Trapping procedure.** We used a cloverleaf trap design with drift fences and a catch box (Kearns et al. 1998). We set three trap lines consisting of two cloverleaf traps with a 20-m drift fence between them from March through May 2006, in all tidal marshes at the Refuge and Nemours, and in all three managed impoundments at the Refuge. We did not trap in managed impoundments on Nemours because the water depth was too great. Traps were set in the morning and checked twice per day for five days or until we caught two rails at a trap site. We placed a wildlife caller and speakers at each trap line to increase capture probabilities (Kearns et al. 1998). This system broadcasted a 1-min recorded call of the King Rail followed by a 1-min recorded call of the Clapper Rail every 3 min for 6 hrs each day.

**Radio attachment and tracking.** We marked each captured rail with a radio-transmitter (Model R1-2C, Holohil Systems Ltd., Ontario, Canada; <4% body weight), attached with a leg-loop harness (Rappole and Tipton 1991; Powell et al. 1998). We released each radio-marked rail at its trap site, then began recording radio-locations, 1 day post release. We tracked and located rails three times per day—morning (9:00–11:00 hrs), midday (13:00–15:00 hrs), and evening (18:00–20:00 hrs) periods. Each tracking period was 4 hrs apart and included a low tide and high tide. We tracked each rail 4 days per week (every other day), except when severe thunderstorms occurred. Each location was recorded with a GPS unit, then mapped using GIS.

**Home range and movement analysis.** To assess home range size and location for each rail, we estimated fixed kernel and minimum convex polygon (MCP) home ranges from  $\geq 30$  radio-locations. Kernel home range associates kernel elements with each point within set locations to minimize the probability of overestimating home range size (Seaman and Powell 1996). The MCP home range size was used to compare our estimates with previous home range studies on rails that estimated MCP home ranges. Distances a rail moved as well as average daily movement between each location identified for each rail were obtained from March–July 2006. We used intervals to eliminate bias due to different sample sizes (number of locations) among rails (Conway 1990). We used 14-day intervals for each rail, then calculated average movement (m) within each interval. These 14-day intervals consisted of days during which locations were recorded three times.

## Results

We captured and radio-marked five King and six Clapper Rails. Locations were obtained for 10 rails, but we obtained  $\geq 30$  locations for only one King and two Clapper Rails; thus, data from these rails were used in home range and movement analyses. Overall, location data from 73% of radio-marked rails were lost due to predation, loss of transmitter, or significant movement out of study area (emigration).



Radio contact with two King Rails was lost before location data could be collected. Of the five King Rails captured on the Refuge, four moved from the refuge to a complex of managed impoundments on private property where we were unable to work. The remaining King Rail, captured in tidal marsh, moved to managed impoundments on the Refuge. All locations ( $n = 67$ ) were in four drawn-down impoundments, and were obtained from 26 April–27 July 2006. Most locations ( $n = 55$ ) were in one managed impoundment (95 % kernel home range = 10 ha; Fig. 1). The 95% kernel home range size for this rail was 31.3 ha, and its MCP was 90.5 ha. The distance traveled in one day by the King Rail ranged from 26.3 m to 238 m.



Figure 1. Aerial photograph (1999) of a 95% (31.3 ha) and 50% kernel home range size (10 ha) of a King Rail's locations ( $n = 55$ ) within two managed impoundments of the Ernest F. Hollings ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge's managed impoundment complex, Beaufort County, S.C. The King Rail was radio-tracked from May–July 2006.



One Clapper Rail was killed by a mink (*Mustela vison*), deduced from teeth marks on the radio-transmitter. Two Clapper Rails each slipped out of their radio-harness and radio contact was lost for one Clapper Rail before data could be collected. For our analyses, we used data from one Clapper Rail before contact was lost and data from another Clapper Rail before it died.

All six Clapper Rails were using tidal marshes before contact was lost or they died. Kernel home range sizes for the two Clapper Rails were 3.6 ha ( $n = 34$  locations) and 0.7 ha ( $n = 38$  locations), respectively. The MCP home ranges for the two Clapper Rails were 7.3 ha and 0.4 ha, respectively. Locations of the two Clapper Rails were within narrow tidal marshes on the Combahee River (Figs. 2 and 3).

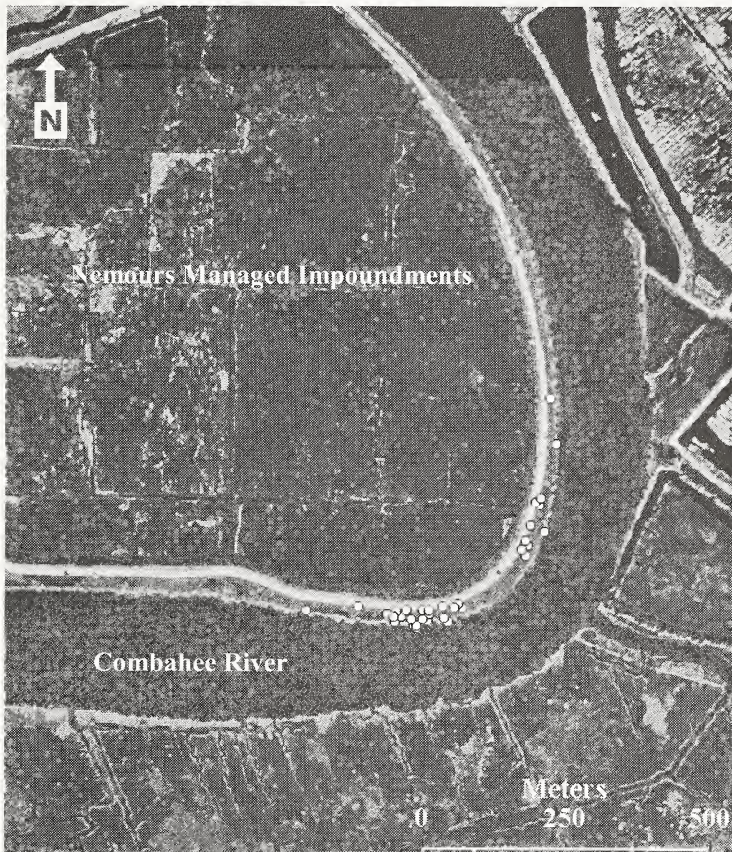


Figure 2. Aerial photograph (1999) of Clapper Rail locations ( $n = 34$ ) located within tidal marsh along the Combahee River and adjacent to managed impoundments during April–June 2006, Nemours Plantation, Beaufort County, S.C. No locations were located across the Combahee River or within Nemours Plantation's managed impoundments.





Figure 3. Aerial photograph (1999) of Clapper Rail locations ( $n = 37$ ) within a tidal marsh along the Combahee River and adjacent to managed impoundments on Nemours Plantation, Beaufort County, S.C. Locations were taken April–June 2006. This Clapper Rail's locations were north of those in Figure 2.

Average daily movement for each Clapper Rail was measured over three 14-day intervals (Fig. 5). Maximum distances traveled in one day by the two Clapper Rails were 394.9 m ( $n = 34$ ) and 162.2 m ( $n = 37$ ), respectively. The mean minimum distances by the two Clapper Rails were 9.9 m ( $n = 34$ ) and 11.0 m ( $n = 37$ ), respectively.

## Discussion

Marshes in our study area have been manipulated by people since the late 1600s; hence, what remains is a complex of managed impoundments and remnant tidal marshes. We replicated trapping methods used elsewhere (Kearns et al. 1998) in managed and tidal marshes, yet captured only 14 rails after many hours of effort. Rather than infer that rails are rare in our study area, we concluded the trapping method was not effective because our study sites included much unconsolidated soil difficult to walk through and tidal ranges that reduced availability of trap sites.

Information obtained from radio-marked rails demonstrated the instability of the marsh system. Data were lost to predation of at least one

rail, to emigration, and to harness failure. Yet, predation events and emigration would be unknown if telemetry had not been used.

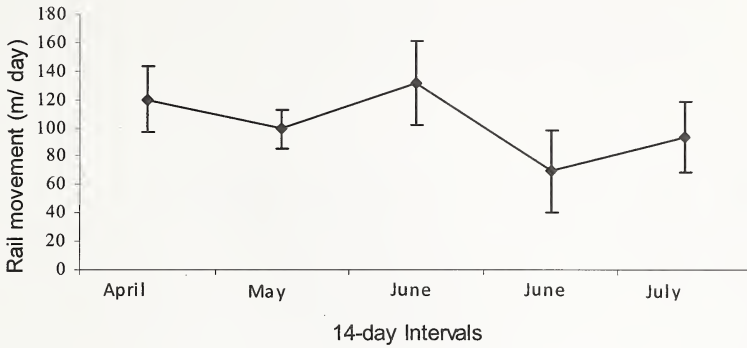


Figure 4. Daily average movements of a King Rail from April–July 2006 at Ernest F. Hollings ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge, Beaufort County, S.C. Daily averages were estimated in each 14-day interval. Error bars represent 95% confidence limits of daily averages for each 14-day interval.

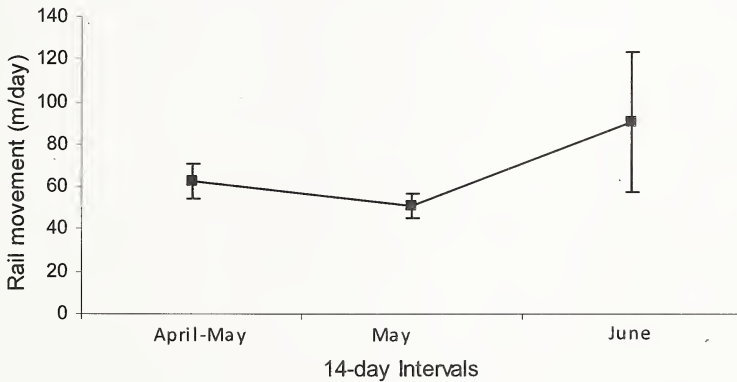


Figure 5. Daily average movements of two Clapper Rails from April–June 2006 at Nemours Plantation, Beaufort County, S.C. Daily averages were taken for each 14-day interval for Clapper Rails. Error bars represent 95% confidence limits of daily averages for each 14-day interval.

We obtained sufficient radio-locations ( $n \geq 30$ ) to estimate home range sizes and movement behavior of only one King Rail and two Clapper Rails because 73% of radio-marked rails were lost. The large percentage of rails lost during this study may not be unusual in the SACZ, as 72% of Clapper Rails in a Georgia study were lost due to predation or loss of transmitters (Cumbee 2003).



The radio-marked King Rail was caught in tidal marsh, but all subsequent locations were in managed impoundments on the Combahee Fields Unit of the Refuge. These brackish (4 to 5 ppt salinity; McGregor 2007) marshes were characterized by tall emergent vegetation interspersed with mudflats; they contained water in canals and ditches, but none on the marsh bed. Contrary to our expectations, this King Rail selected brackish, managed impoundments. Along the Gulf Coast, King Rails use inland fresh to brackish wetlands during the breeding season (Meanley 1992). Managed impoundments in the SACZ may provide flood-free nesting habitat, especially during spring high tides, if water is drawn down in early spring (March) and kept shallow or below bed level through mid-summer (July).

The average daily movement of the King Rail ranged from 65 to 140 m, and it used one impoundment for most of the breeding season. Because the MCP home range size of the King Rail on the Refuge was large and no nests were located in the managed impoundments, this individual may have been a male and/or a juvenile (Zembel et al. 1989).

Clapper Rails were captured only on Nemours, and the two from which radio-locations were obtained were found only in tidal marsh. Likely, impoundments were not used because they were flooded through the breeding season and did not provide mudflats for foraging or tall vegetation needed for nest sites (Lewis and Garrison 1983; Gaines et al. 2003). Tidal marshes were brackish to saline (~17 ppt salinity); hence, our hypothesis that Clapper Rails would use marshes with greater salinity was supported.

One of the two MCP home ranges of Clapper Rails in this study (7.3 ha) was larger than the average MCP home range reported in other studies (0.4 to 1.8 ha; Eddleman and Conway 1998; Cumbee 2003). Possibly, the larger home range resulted from the rail losing its nest during severe weather, then re-nesting at a second location (Cumbee 2003).

Clapper Rail daily movements were within narrow, tidal marsh bordering the Combahee River. None of the rails crossed the river (Figs. 2, 3). Average daily movement (66.8 m, SE = 13 m;  $n = 2$  rails) was less than that reported in studies of Clapper Rails occupying different habitat types in western North America (263 m; Zembal et al. 1989; Conway 1990).

Our preliminary data suggest both that fresh to brackish, managed impoundments and tidal marshes in the ACE Basin provide habitat for King Rails, and that Clapper Rails use only brackish to saline tidal marshes. Thus, this initial study suggests King and Clapper Rails partition habitat by the interacting factors of location and salinity range. However, the ranges of both rails may overlap in lower-salinity, brackish marshes (Graves 2001). Longer studies with larger sample sizes will provide greater understanding of rail species distribution, habitat use, movement behavior, and causes of mortality.

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## General Field Notes

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*General Field Notes* briefly report such items as rare sightings, unusual behaviors, significant nesting records, or summaries of such items.

*First, second, or third sightings of species in either state must be submitted to the appropriate Bird Records Committee prior to publication in The Chat.*

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### A Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) in Forsyth County: First Record for North Carolina

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The Archie Elledge Wastewater Treatment Plant is one of Winston-Salem's best birdwatching sites. In spring and fall, two settling ponds at the plant have historically provided excellent habitat for migrating shorebirds. Recent changes in wastewater processing have produced cleaner and deeper water in the ponds, resulting in their greater utilization by waterfowl. Cold weather in the Northeast during January 2009 brought a greater number and variety of waterfowl than usual for the site.

On 30 January 2009, the presence of a White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*), Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*), Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*), and Lesser Scaup (*A. affinis*) enticed Hopkins to scrutinize all of the waterfowl. He noted a male diving duck with white flanks and a black back surfacing near three female scaup. When compared to nearby Ring-necked Ducks (*A. collaris*), its head was a different shape and a small tuft of feathers protruded from the back of the head. The bird fit the description and illustration of a Tufted Duck (*A. fuligula*) in the Sibley guide (2000).

Because Tufted Duck is not an expected bird for Forsyth County, Hopkins contacted David and Susan Disher, asking them to bring a camera with telephoto lens and additional bird reference books. John Haire happened to come by to examine the duck flock, and he agreed that the bird could be a Tufted Duck. Haire and Hopkins took digiscope photographs while David Disher took photographs with his telephoto setup. After examining photographs, comparing them with Tufted Duck photographs on European websites, and studying the literature, all agreed that the bird was a Tufted Duck.

Haire posted a note on the Carolinabirds listserve that evening so that other North Carolina birders could look for the bird the next day. The duck stayed at the same location for two weeks and was last seen on 14 February 2009. Security personnel at the treatment plant documented the visits of over 700 birders who came to see the duck.

### Observations

The Tufted Duck at Archie Elledge Wastewater Plant had a black head and a solid black back without vermiculations. The flanks were solid white without gray. The head shape was generally round with a steep forehead, but without a posterior peak like that of nearby Ring-necked Ducks. There was a small tuft of feathers on the back of the head (Fig. 1), and the head occasionally reflected a greenish or purplish iridescent sheen. The eyes were bright yellow. The bill was bluish-gray with a prominent black tip and a pale area of white adjacent to the black tip. The bill had no white at the base or along the edge. The wings had dark coverts and an extensive white stripe across the secondaries and primaries (Fig. 2). The legs, visible when the bird preened, were dark in color, and no metal bands were seen on the legs. The bird did not show aberrant feather wear that would indicate the duck was a captive bird. Compared to nearby waterfowl, the Tufted Duck was slightly smaller than the Ring-necked Ducks and about the same size as the female Lesser Scaup.



Figure 1. Tufted Duck found at Archie Elledge Wastewater Treatment Plant, Winston-Salem on January 30, 2009. Note the white flank, solid black back, and small tuft on the head. Photo by Marbry Hopkins.

This bird behaved in the same manner as the other waterfowl in the pond, feeding regularly with several female scaup and the Ring-necked Ducks. Most of the birds would feed on the far side of the pond from the common



viewing area, but if approached from the far side, the mixed flock would drift to the center of the water. Close approach was not possible despite multiple attempts over the two weeks.



Figure 2. Tufted Duck stretching its wings showing white secondaries and primaries. Photo by David Disher.

The authors considered the possibility of Tufted Duck hybrids, which are well described in Mullarney et al. (2000). We ruled out hybrids with Greater and Lesser Scaup because of the lack of vermiculations on the back. We also ruled out hybrids with Ring-necked Duck because they maintain gray flanks and a peaked head, which we did not see on this bird. Tufted Duck and Common Pochard (*A. ferina*) hybrids are seen in Europe, but those birds have a dark eye and darker flanks than the Winston-Salem duck.



Figure 3. Tufted Duck before departure, with tuft more prominent. Photo by John Haire.



The weather during the first several days of viewing was sunny but cold, with bright light making observation ideal. Many observers took good quality photographs (Fig. 3) documenting the key field marks and posted them online for others to review.

### **Provenance**

Provenance of waterfowl is always in question because of numerous waterfowl collections in the eastern states. Hopkins contacted a local aviculturist who wished to remain anonymous. His private collection of waterfowl is located on the western edge of Forsyth County about seven miles from the wastewater plant. He raised Tufted Ducks approximately 10 years ago but has not kept that species since then. He did not know of others in the area who raise Tufted Ducks.

Christian Newton of the Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Park in Scotland Neck, NC, indicated (e-mail to Carolinabirds listserve) that Tufted Ducks were kept at the facility but that none were missing. He also stated (e-mail to John Haire) that the facility had not sold Tufted Ducks to collectors on the East Coast in the previous year.

Tufted Ducks are native to Eurasia, breeding from Iceland to the Kamchatka Peninsula. Tufted Ducks from central and northwest Europe are mostly sedentary, but the northern Eurasian population winters in the Mediterranean Basin, sub-Saharan and North Africa, the Middle East, Central India, and Southeast Asia (del Hoyo et al. 1992).

Tufted Duck is a Code-3 species of the American Birding Association, indicating that individuals occur in very low numbers but annually in the ABA Checklist Area (ABA 2008). Tufted Ducks are most commonly reported in winter in Alaska and the West Coast of North America (del Hoyo et al. 1992). All northeast and mid-Atlantic states north of North Carolina have accepted records of Tufted Duck. Virginia, the southernmost state on the Atlantic coast with a record of Tufted Duck, has three accepted records: two from the piedmont and one from the coast (Rottenborn and Brinkley 2007).

Other reports of Tufted Duck along the Atlantic coast were documented during the winter of 2008–2009. Over the 13–15 February 2009 weekend, the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) sponsored by the National Audubon Society and Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology reported five Tufted Ducks at St. John's, Newfoundland; two at Saint John, New Brunswick; and one at Cambridge, MD, that was present for many weeks. The Rare Bird Alerts of Westport, ME, and Providence, RI, also each reported a single bird in early 2009.

Lee (2000) commented on extralimital waterfowl and the problem of provenance. He recommended a conservative approach to the acceptance of new records but favored an open mind in decisions. He did not specifically discuss Tufted Duck, but the presence of the Winston-Salem bird in the winter season, its behavior when approached, the lack of cage wear on

feathers, and the occurrence of many other records of the species in early 2009 are consistent with a wild origin.

The Avendex database (Redshank Software 2008) lists no records of Tufted Duck in North Carolina. If accepted by the NC Bird Records Committee, both in terms of identification and provenance, this sighting will be the first for the state, and acceptance of photos will place the species directly onto the Official List.

### **Acknowledgments**

We would like to thank the staff of the Archie Elledge Wastewater Treatment Plant for providing access to birders from North Carolina and surrounding states so they could view the Tufted Duck. Special thanks go to the two security guards whose workload increased tremendously. We also would like to thank Harry LeGrand for encouraging us to write this General Field Note and for editing this Note.

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## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Summer 2009, unless otherwise noted)

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*Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.*

Winter	December 1–February 28	due March 20
Spring	March 1–May 31	due June 20
Summer	June 1–July 31	due August 20
Fall	August 1–November 30	due December 20

*Reports can be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you type them and list the sightings according to the birds in checklist order (not according to dates or locations). If you submit your report to me through e-mail, please type your report directly into the message or copy it from a word processing program directly into the message. You may also attach your file to the e-mail, but if you do, please let me know the program used and also send a second version saved as a text (.txt) file.*

*Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.*

*Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.*

*I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.*

*If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.*

**Correction:** The report of 21 Swainson's Warblers and 19 Kentucky Warblers along a 13 mile stretch of the Roanoke River between Palmyra and Hamilton, NC, 2–4 May, was made by Merrill Lynch, not Frank Enders as reported in the Summer 2009 issue of *The Chat*. I apologize for the error.

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** Eight were found during a Mecklenburg Audubon field trip to Donnelly WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 13 June (Ron Clark



et al.). A high count of 22 was made at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 20 June, where the species was present the entire period (Steve Calver).



Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, 14 June 2009, Donnelly Wildlife Management Area, SC. Photo by Cathy Miller

**American Black Duck:** South of the species' typical summer range was a pair seen feeding in the pools on Goat Island, Mt Pleasant, SC, 24 June (David Abbott).

**Blue-winged Teal:** An individual seen flying in the company of Mallards in the wetlands near the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in Goldsboro, NC, 11 July (Eric Dean) was somewhat unusual for the middle of summer.

**Green-winged Teal:** An individual lingered at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, through June, and two were seen there 2 July (Steve Calver).

**Ring-necked Duck:** Late to depart was an individual on Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, 1 June (Ali Iyoob) and a female on Bass Lake in Blowing Rock, NC, 6 June (Jeff Lewis).

**Greater Scaup:** An individual found at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 20 June (Steve Calver) was quite an unusual find for the summer season.

**Surf Scoter:** Lingering into summer were two males on Crab Bank, Charleston Co, SC, 20–21 June, where one was photographed, with one male continuing through 23 June (Elizabeth Anderegg, Diane Girardeau, *fide* Dennis Forsythe).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Reports of lingering birds included two near the jetty at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 1 June (Gabe Leidy); seven around spoil islands inside Oregon Inlet, NC, 14 June, with three remaining 27 June (Jeff Lewis); and an individual at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 20 June (Steve Calver).

**Ruddy Duck:** As in past years, this species summered at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, with a high count of 84 made on 6 June. Evidence of nesting was also obtained again this year when a pair with young was seen on 27 June (Steve Calver).

**Red-throated Loon:** The period's only report was of an individual in non-breeding plumage seen flying down the shoreline at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 1 June (Gabe Leidy).

**Common Loon:** This year's reports of lingering/summering Common Loons included a juvenile that was rescued by a wildlife rehabilitator and released later that day at Salem Lake, Winston-Salem, NC, 10 June (Jean Chamberlain, *fide* Phil Dickinson); an adult in breeding plumage near the dam at Falls Lake, Wake Co, NC, 30 June through the end of the period (Matt Daw); a non-breeding-plumaged individual at Glenburnie Quarry in New Bern, NC, 3 July (Al Gamache); and a seemingly healthy non-breeding plumaged individual on Lookout Shoals Lake, Catawba Co/Iredell Co, NC, 18 July (Lori Owenby).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Locally unusual in mid-summer was an adult found at Cowan's Ford WR, NC, 28 June (David Wright). As in previous years, this species bred in the wetlands near the WTP in Goldsboro, NC, this summer (Eric Dean).

**Horned Grebe:** Lingering into summer was a breeding-plumaged individual seen at Pivers Island, Beaufort, NC, through at least 4 June (John Fussell, Ross McGregor).

**Herald (Trinidad) Petrel:** This rare pelagic species was seen only once this summer—a dark-phase bird found on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 7 June (Brian Patteson et al.).

**Fea's Petrel:** This rare pelagic species was seen twice this period, on pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 7 and 18 June (Brian Patteson et al.).

**Bermuda Petrel:** This very rare pelagic species was seen and photographed during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 27 June (Brian Patteson et al.).

**Manx Shearwater:** A rare from-shore sighting was made from the E end of Shackleford Banks, NC, of an individual flying between Shackleford and Core Banks, 2 July (Frank Enders).

**Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel:** One was briefly seen and photographed when it visited a chum slick during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 6 June (Brian Patteson, et al.), providing the state with its third documented record of this very rare vagrant.

**Tropicbirds:** Both White-tailed and Red-billed Tropicbirds were seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 3 June (Brian Patteson et al.). Atypically, no other report of either species was made throughout the rest of the summer season.

**Brown Booby:** A first-summer individual was observed flying E, just E of Hatteras Inlet, NC, during a half-day fishing trip 11 June (Brian Patteson), providing the state with its first report of this rare tropical vagrant in three years.



**Northern Gannet:** A juvenile photographed flying over the ocean from Topsail Island, NC, 4 July (Ali Iyob) was a good find for the mid-summer.

**American Bittern:** One found near the lodge impoundments at Donnelly WMA, SC, 20 July (Jack Eckstine) was an unexpected find for the summer season.

**Least Bittern:** Like last year, this species was seen in the wetlands near the WTP in Goldsboro, NC, throughout the summer, with a high count of five made 11 July (Eric Dean).

**Great Egret:** Post-breeding dispersal resulted in multiple sightings of this species in the western part of our region. The westernmost report was of six in a dry field in the Sandy Mush Valley near Leicester, NC, 25 July (James Atkinson).

**Little Blue Heron:** Post-breeding dispersal resulted in inland sightings of this coastal breeder at the Orangeburg, SC, fish hatchery, where four were seen 17 July (Jeff Lemons); and at the Archie Elledge WTP in Winston-Salem, NC, where a juvenile was seen 25 July through the end of the period (Dennis & Lynn Burnette, et al.).

**Reddish Egret:** The summer's reports included a juvenile on South Litchfield Beach, SC, 3 June (Paul Serridge); a juvenile at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 4 June and 3 July (Jack Peachey) and an adult there 1–29 July (Jerry Kerschner); an adult at the S end of Topsail Island, NC, 24 June (Gilbert Grant); one on Shackleford Banks, NC, 1 July (Frank Enders); six at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 10–17 July (Steve Calver); and a juvenile near Lea/Hutaff Island, Pender Co, NC, 31 July (Grant).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Unusual for the mountain locality was an individual seen on a roadside in Hot Springs, NC, 25 July (Ali Iyob).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** At Miller Park in Winston-Salem, NC, breeding numbers were down this year, possibly due to the death of two pine trees used for nesting in past years. Only two nests were found this year, containing a total of four chicks, 15 June (Phil Dickinson).



Reddish Egret, 29 July 2009, Huntington Beach State Park. Photo by Jerry Kerschner.



**Glossy Ibis:** 85 seen at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 25 July (Ricky Davis), provided an excellent count for that inland location.

**Roseate Spoonbill:** This species made a historic northerly movement during post-breeding dispersal this year, with sightings made at locations more northerly and in higher concentrations than usual. North Carolina's sightings included two in a swamp along the Cape Fear River in NE Duplin Co, 13–17 June (Eric Dean, Mary Bridges); two in a private impoundment near Trenton, Jones Co, 15 July (Clancy Ballenger); at least one at Sunset Beach from 16 June (Dwayne Martin) through the end of the period, with a high count of four on 5 July (Randy Climpson, Robert Ostrowski) and 12 July (Ricky Davis); and several at Pea Island NWR, 26 June (Neal Moore, Lee Yoder, Jeff Lewis, m. obs.) through the end of the period, with a high count of nine (!) reported by a USFW volunteer 5 July (*fide* Lewis). In South Carolina, where this species is more expected but still uncommon, sightings included four on Goat Island, Mt Pleasant, 24 June (David Abbott), and seven there 21 July (Mike Turner et al.); up to two at Huntington Beach SP, 6 July (Ritch Lilly, Jack Peachey, m. obs.) through the end of the period; and many at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, throughout the period, with a high count of 205 made on 2 July (Steve Calver).



Roseate Spoonbill, 18 July 2009, Huntington Beach SP, SC. Photo by Jerry Kerschner.

**Wood Stork:** Farther north and/or inland than usual were three, an adult and two juveniles, in a swamp along the Cape Fear River in NE Duplin Co, NC, 14 June (Eric Dean); nine along the Cape Fear River near Riegelwood, NC, 21 June (Kent Fiala); a juvenile, probably the same bird reported from

Cowan's Ford WR in late May, at a golf course in central Charlotte, NC, 17 June (David & Marcia Wright, Tom Sanders, et al.); an individual in New Field, Pea Island, NC, 21 June (Neal Moore, *fide* Jeff Lewis); and an individual on Topsail Island, NC, 4 July (Ali Iyooob).

**Swallow-tailed Kite:** Unusually far north was an individual seen near the lighthouse pond on Bodie Island, NC, 1 June (Brian Van Druten, *fide* Jeff Lewis). The peak count of the annual congregation over fields near Allendale, SC, was 100 on 25 July (John Cely et al.).

**Mississippi Kite:** An emaciated and dehydrated adult was found in Bessemer City, NC, and taken to the Carolina Raptor Center for rehabilitation, 3 July (*fide* Ron Clark). This location is west of the species' typical range.

**Northern Harrier:** A handful of these birds tend to linger along the coast each summer. This year's coastal reports included a male on Bodie Island, NC, near Oregon Inlet, 14 June (Jeff Lewis) and 29 June (Linda & Skip Ward); and two juveniles at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 5 and 19 July (John Fussell). Most interesting, though, was the piedmont report of a female seen multiple times in the wetland near the river at Tanglewood Park in Clemmons, NC, in early-to-mid June (Phil Dickinson).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** A pair appeared to have bred in SE Croatan NF, near Mill Creek, NC, again this year, as an adult pair was regularly seen throughout the summer and a juvenile was seen in the same area in August (Jack Fennell, *fide* John Fussell).

**Black Rail:** Participants of a Mecklenburg Audubon field trip were treated to a brief look at this hard-to-see species at Bear Island WMA, SC, 13 June (Ron Clark et al.).

**King Rail:** Locally unusual was one heard calling in the wetlands near the WTP in Goldsboro, NC, 18 July (Eric Dean).

**Common Moorhen:** The wetlands near the WTP in Goldsboro, NC, hosted breeding moorhens this year, with three to four adults with two broods of chicks seen 11 July (Eric Dean).

**American Coot:** Reports of lingering individuals included "at least one" at the Davis Impoundment in Carteret Co, NC (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, et al.); and one on Lake Conestee in Greenville, SC, 3 July (Steve Cox). Reports of breeding included a pair in the wetlands near the WTP in Goldsboro, NC, this summer (Eric Dean); and a pair, possibly breeding, at Donnelly WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 13 June (Ron Clark et al.).

**Sandhill Crane:** Quite unusual was the summer sighting of a solitary Sandhill Crane, foraging in a recently-mowed roadside near Columbia, NC, 2 June (Tye Anderson). Following a string of rumored sightings of an adult pair in N Union Co, NC, in the past ten months, an adult bird was found injured in nearby Rock Hill, SC, and was taken to a wildlife rehabilitator, 26 June (Jennifer Gordon, *fide* David Wright). A few days later, another adult was found in a partially-mowed pasture in nearby S Mecklenburg Co, NC, 1 July (David & Marcia Wright).



**Black-bellied Plover:** 217 were counted at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 25 July (Ricky Davis), providing a good count for a site away from the coast.

**American Golden-Plover:** One photographed on the E end of Kiawah Island, SC, 4 July (Tom Giduz) was either a very late spring migrant or a very early fall migrant.

**Wilson's Plover:** Present throughout the period at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, a high count of this species was made on 27 June, when 47 were seen (Steve Calver).

**Black-necked Stilt:** Some of the more notable counts of this elegant shorebird included 60, including two broods, at the Hob Caw Impoundments in Georgetown, SC, 24 June (David Abbott); 11 at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 25 July (Ricky Davis); and a high count of 555 at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 10 July, where many nested during the season (Steve Calver).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** An impressive count of 930 was made at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 25 July (Ricky Davis).

**Upland Sandpiper:** Some of the first fall migrants to pass through our region were two at the Orangeburg, SC, sod farm, 17 July (Jeff Lemons, David Weathers); one at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 25 July (Ricky Davis); two at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 26 July (John Fussell, Jack Fennell); and one at the Evergreen Sod Farm in Turbeville, SC, 31 July (Shawn Smolen-Morton).

**Long-billed Curlew:** The summer's only sighting of our largest shorebird was of two on the E end of Shackleford Banks, NC, 1 July (Frank Enders).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** An early fall migrant was found at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 25 July (Ricky Davis).

**Marbled Godwit:** Two of the more notable summer counts of this species were seven on the E end of Shackleford Banks, NC, 30 June (Frank Enders) and four at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 25 July (Ricky Davis).

**Peeps:** Low water levels and exposed mudflats at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 25 July, attracted fantastic numbers of early migratory sandpipers. The genus *Calidris* was well represented with 810 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 143 Western Sandpipers, 1290 Least Sandpipers, and 59 Pectoral Sandpipers (Ricky Davis).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** Reports of early fall migrants included a high count of 254 at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 24 July (Steve Calver); 108 at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 25 July (Ricky Davis); and seven at the Evergreen Sod Farm in Turbeville, SC, 26 July (Shawn Smolen-Morton).

**Dowitchers:** Early southbound migrants were found at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 25 July, where 168 Short-billed and four Long-billed were counted (Ricky Davis).

**American Woodcock:** Hard-to-find in summer, this ground-dwelling bird was flushed at Congaree NP, SC, 28 June (John Grego); at West Branch Nature Preserve in Davidson, NC, 8 July (Taylor Piephoff, Don Seriff); and at Cowans Ford WR, N Mecklenburg Co, NC, 15 July (Christa Rogers, *fide* Piephoff).



**Wilson's Phalarope:** The Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, provides the summer's only report of this migratory shorebird, with three on 10 July, a high count of six on 20 July, and five remaining on 24 July (Steve Calver).

**Ring-billed Gull:** Out-of-season individuals were seen at Falls Lake, Wake Co, NC, 13 June (Ali Iyoob); and over Lake Norman, Lincoln Co, NC, 22 July (David Wright).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Rare in the middle of summer, an adult was photographed on the E end of Sunset Beach, NC, 9 July (Robert Ostrowski).

**Sooty Tern:** A rare from-shore sighting was made over the S end of Topsail Island, NC, when an adult, in flight, was seen 31 July (Gilbert Grant).

**Caspian Tern:** Unusual for the time of year was the high number, 11, counted at Davis Impoundment in Carteret Co, NC, 21 June (John Fussell, Jack Fennell).

**Common Tern:** One was found unusually far inland, at a sandpit in Wayne Co, NC, 18 July (Eric Dean).

**Black Skimmer:** Farther from the coast than usual was the sighting of a Black Skimmer over the Neuse River Estuary, near Havelock, NC, 13 June (John Fussell).

**Parasitic Jaeger:** An individual, in flight, was seen over the Pamlico Sound just E of Ocracoke Village, NC, 7 June (Susse Wright).

**White-winged Dove:** One visited the same feeder in North Topsail Beach, NC, where one visited last summer, for a few days in late June (Connie Shertz).

**Common Ground-Dove:** Reports of this declining species included one on the W side of the point at South Litchfield Beach, SC, 11 June (Paul Serridge); two, in flight, at Botany Bay WMA, SC, 12 June (Ron Clark et al.); one on Daniel Island, SC, 4 July (Shawn Hayes); and a high count of eight at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 20 June (Steve Calver).

**Black-hooded Parakeet:** "Of questionable origin" was a pair seen multiple times in downtown Morehead City, NC, in late July into August (John Fussell).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** East of its typical breeding range was a territorial pair found along Silvertown Rd in SW Halifax Co, NC, 21 June (Ricky Davis). One was relocated at the same location 9 July (Frank Enders et al.).

**Chuck-will's-widow:** Two were heard calling at an unusually high elevation in the Brushy Mountains, Alexander Co, NC, 3 July (Harry LeGrand, Jeff Pippen).

**Alder Flycatcher:** An individual discovered singing on territory at the Roaring Creek Valley in the Roan Highlands of Avery Co, NC, 11 June (Merrill Lynch) may represent a new nesting site for this species.

**Willow Flycatcher:** Reports made east of this species' typical breeding range included one heard calling in S Durham, NC, 3–9 June (Johnny Wilson); three singing males, and a presumed female, in the wetlands along Ballenger Rd near PTI Airport in Greensboro, NC, 16 June (Henry &

Elizabeth Link); three singing males at Civitan Park in Winston-Salem, NC, throughout the period (John Haire); and one heard calling along a creek in a large pasture off NC-48 in SW Halifax Co, NC, 21 June (Ricky Davis).



Black-billed Cuckoo, 21 June 2009, Halifax Co, NC. Photo by Ricky Davis.

**Least Flycatcher:** An individual was seen and heard singing at Durant Nature Park in N Raleigh, NC, 1 July (Ali Iyoob), east of the species' typical breeding range.

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** Noteworthy for the site's high elevation (4500 ft) was a pair that nested in Bluff Mountain Preserve, near West Jefferson, NC, 14 May–22 July (Merrill Lynch).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** Though there were no reports of breeding by this species in the Carolinas this summer, one transitory male was seen and photographed at the Gaston Country Club in Gastonia, NC, 31 May–21 June (Steve Tracy, m. obs.).

**Warbling Vireo:** Two active nests were found east of the species' typical breeding range at Civitan Park in Winston-Salem, NC, 9 June (Phil Dickinson).

**Black-whiskered Vireo:** An astounding find for a location away from the coast, an individual was heard and then seen along Billfinger Rd in E Croatan NF, SE Craven Co, NC, 13 June (John Fussell). Attempts to relocate the bird later that day were unsuccessful.

**Common Raven:** Outside of the mountains, some of the higher counts included six over St. Stephens Park in NE Hickory, NC, 11 June (Dwayne



Martin); three over the Eno Trace Subdivision in N Durham, NC, 15 July (David Ross); and three at a quarry in S Charlotte, NC, 24 July (David & Marcia Wright) where, according to quarry personnel, up to five were seen during the spring.

**Horned Lark:** Nesting was confirmed on Big Yellow Mountain, Avery Co, NC, when two adults and nestlings were photographed 11 June (Curtis Smalling, Nora Schubert, David Ray, Jay Leutze). Three adult males and four adult females were found in a rocky cattle pasture on Bearwallow Mountain in NE Henderson Co, NC, 3 July (Christine Kelly). Four were seen at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 21 June (John Fussell, Jack Fennell) though no evidence of nesting was found at the site this year.

**Tree Swallow:** Two seen at Lake Landing, Hyde Co, NC, 11 July (Jeff Lewis) may indicate attempted breeding in that area.

**Cliff Swallow:** Strangely, this species did not begin building nests on the side of the Hampton Inn in Havelock, NC, a traditional nesting site, until the late date of 24 June, probably due to lack of mud (John Fussell). Though 98 nests were counted by 7 July, all but two nests were abandoned by the end of July (Fussell).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** Locally unusual was a pair, apparently breeding, repeatedly seen in an old-growth stand of Carolina Hemlock at Bluff Mountain Preserve, at about 4500 ft, near West Jefferson, NC, throughout the period (Merrill Lynch).

**Hermit Thrush:** Localized breeders at our higher elevations, Hermit Thrushes were heard singing in Huckleberry Field along the Cherohala Skyway in Graham Co, NC, 14–17 June (David Trently, Mike Nelson); and on Roan Mountain, NC, where three to four were found in early June (Rick Knight).

**Sprague's Pipit:** A very lost and exhausted Sprague's Pipit landed on a boat about 40 miles off Corolla, NC, where it was photographed, 2 June (Lauren Morgens, *fide* Matt Sarver). There are only a handful of records of this species in the state, with this sighting providing the first offshore record.

**Cedar Waxwing:** Reports of summer lingerers in the eastern half of our region included five at the dam on Falls Lake, Wake Co, NC, 7 June (Ali Iyooob); two N of Hillsborough, NC, 7 June (Jeff Pippen); and a pair near Ringwood, Halifax Co, NC, 19 July (Merrill Lynch). No evidence of nesting was found at these sites, though.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** A first-winter male found at Evergreen Nature Preserve in Mecklenburg Co, NC, 29 July (Tom Sanders) must have been an extremely early fall migrant.

**Magnolia Warbler:** Up to four were seen on Roan Mountain, NC, throughout June (Rick Knight).

**Cerulean Warbler:** Locally unusual was an immature seen in a yard in Watauga Co, NC, 11 July (Merrill Lynch).

**American Redstart:** Presumably an early migrant and not a local breeder, an individual was found on Pea Island, NC, 27 June (Jeff Lewis, Audrey Whitlock).



**Waterthrush sp.** : Presumed early migrants were found in the Elizabethan Gardens in Manteo, NC, 14 July (Jeff Lewis); and in the Holly Shelter Game Land, Pender Co, NC, 14 July (Bruce Smithson, Amy Williamson).

**Vesper Sparrow:** One or two males were observed singing on Roan Mountain, NC, in early June (Rick Knight).

**Lark Sparrow:** Breeding apparently took place at Carolina Sandhills NWR in McBee, SC, as individuals were located 18 June (Dwayne Martin) and 22 June (Paul Serridge, et al.) and a juvenile was photographed there, 4 July (Doug and Pam DeNeve).



Juvenile Lark Sparrow, 4 July 2009, Carolina Sandhills NWR, SC. Photo by Doug DeNeve.

**Savannah Sparrow:** Suggestive of attempted breeding in the area was an individual observed singing from a fencepost in a pasture along Butler Farm Rd in Henderson Co, NC, 23–28 June (Marilyn Westphal). At least four singing males were seen and heard during a Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), at a previously unknown nesting site near Sparta, NC, 27 June (Merrill Lynch).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Somewhat unusual for the coastal plain in summer were three singing males at the Evergreen Sod Farm in Turbeville, SC, 26–31 July (Shawn Smolen-Morton).

**Song Sparrow:** At the eastern edge of the species' typical breeding range was a pair that nested near the intersection of I-95 and NC-158 in Roanoke Rapids, NC, throughout the period (Ricky Davis). Also found in the eastern part of the state were territorial males singing in NW Rocky Mount, NC, and in NE Wilson, NC, throughout the period, though nesting was not confirmed (Davis).

**Painted Bunting:** As in recent years, an individual was found singing in the North River community of Carteret Co, NC, 14 June, several miles inland of the species' typical northern range limit (John Fussell).

**Dickcissel:** Four singing males continued in the fields near Cherry Hospital, Goldsboro, NC, throughout the summer (Eric Dean). Up to four males and one female were seen in the Clear Springs subdivision of Simpsonville, SC, 21 June–15 July (Simon Harvey, Paul Serridge, Steve Cox, et al.). An amazing count of 17 was made at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 7 and 11 June, with juveniles seen later in the summer (John Fussell).



Dickcissel, 25 June 2009, Simpsonville, SC.  
Photo by Louis Womble.

**Bobolink:** First observed in May, three territorial males continued in a large pasture in Henderson Co, NC, through mid-June, with one still singing into late June (Marilyn Westphal).

**Shiny Cowbird:** A male was discovered inside a mixed flock of blackbirds on the lawn of the Fishing Center at Oregon Inlet, NC, 13 June (Ned Brinkley), but was never relocated.

**Baltimore Oriole:** East of the species' typical breeding range was a pair found nesting at Lake Cunningham, Greer, SC, in early June (Chip Gilbert). This species was also seen at Civitan Park, Winston-Salem, NC, in mid-June, suggestive of attempted breeding, though no evidence was found (Phil Dickinson).

**Red Crossbill:** Some of the better counts of this species included "as many as ten" on Grandfather Mountain, 6 June (Jeff Lewis); three pairs along the Blue Ridge Parkway near Mt. Mitchell, NC, 25 July (Marilyn Westphal); and four along the Appalachian Trail near Hot Springs, NC, 25 July (Ali Iyooob).

# In Memoriam: Philip Crutchfield<sup>1</sup>

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## Hal Broadfoot

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People are always giving me things having to do with birds, some more useful than others. And sometimes, what looks at first to be trash, turns out to be treasure. Once, a friend gave me an old field guide that had belonged to her grandmother. Other than the provenance, the book was nothing special; I already had several similar copies. But secreted inside the pages was a forty-year-old, yellowed copy of Doris Hauser's newspaper column. I had never seen it before, and it became an impetus for this column, with the same name, in Mrs. Hauser's honor.

Another time I got a box of old bird magazines. There were no tangible objects tucked away inside, just a lot of old information. I read them anyway. They proved to be a treasure map.

I had never seen one of the magazines, a journal of unusual sightings called *Audubon Field Notes*. (It has changed names several times; now it's called *North American Birds*.) Its content came from birders from around North America, who submitted notable birds by snail mail to regional editors for possible inclusion in the magazine. Six months later when the magazine came out, the birding community would get to read what you and everyone else had seen two seasons before. Of course, my copies were much older. I was learning what people had found years before.

Each sighting recorded the bird, a general location, and the date. At the end of the record, the editors put the initials of the person who had submitted it. Every issue had at least one report of an incredible find in or near Fayetteville, and always by PJC. Philip J. Crutchfield.

Who was Mr. Crutchfield? And how did he find such great birds?

Later, I subscribed to the magazine and discovered that PJC was not just a name from the past. Each quarterly issue had his reports. He saw birds that I had hardly heard of at the time, and he was seeing them in Cumberland County. Anhinga. Wood stork. Western Kingbird. I looked up his telephone number and almost called him, but I did not.

One late fall afternoon, I was standing beside Forest Lake (Clark's Pond, really) trying to identify some distant ducks. A man walked up, binoculars in hand, and started to do the same. We talked a little, but all the while he looked for birds. Up. Down. He put his binoculars on everything remotely avian.

At some point I saw it. I do not recall if it was a monogrammed shirt or eyeglass case or whether he had just painted the initials on his binoculars,

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted with permission from the column "About Birds" in *The Fayetteville Observer*, 8 September 2009. Philip Crutchfield was a long-time member of the Carolina Bird Club and regular contributor to *The Chat*, both in Briefs for the Files and as author of field notes, and he served as secretary and as a member-at-large on the executive committee of the club.



but there it was, "PJC." It was a Livingstone/Stanley moment for me, and I said something ineloquent, like, "You're Philip J. Crutchfield." He agreed that he was, and our friendship began.

### **Appreciation**

Phil introduced me to places in Cumberland County that I had never known. Even familiar spots revealed themselves anew through his eyes. He was an ecologist, and I began to think a bit like one too, albeit without the formal scientific education. I began to understand why we saw certain types of living things in certain places. I started to appreciate the cycles of nature and the timing of migration. I heard—I wished I could say I learned—the names of hundreds of grasses, wildflowers, vines, shrubs, and trees. I saw firsthand the negative impact of poorly planned and poorly executed development. I saw environmental degradation and the beauty that remains. But, most of all, we found birds.

We birded River Road and Becker's Sand & Gravel. We tromped around millponds, swamps, fields, and streams. We birded from his car and on foot in parks and on roadsides. Phil birded every day, at least a little. On weekends or evenings after work, I went with him when I could. I wish I had gone more often.

I do not know how many species on my life list that Phil helped me find. Certainly, he was with me when I saw most of the more than 200 different species I have identified in Cumberland County. The observational skills he taught me and the disciplined approach he modeled are responsible for the rest. If I have passed on anything worthwhile in this column [About Birds] over the last 10 years, it probably had its genesis in something Phil passed on to me.

Philip James Crutchfield died last month. I treasure my memories of my friend and teacher.

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# CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

[www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org)

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

Membership is open to all persons interested in the conservation, natural history, and study of wildlife with particular emphasis on birds. Dues, contributions, and bequests to the Club may be deductible from state and federal income and estate taxes. Make checks payable to Carolina Bird Club, Inc. Send checks or correspondence regarding membership or change of address to the Headquarters Secretary. Dues include \$4 for a subscription to the *CBC Newsletter* and \$5 for a subscription to *The Chat*. Associate members do not receive a separate subscription to publications.

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	Ron Clark, Kings Mountain, NC	waxwing@bellsouth.net
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# THE CHAT

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North Carolina  
South Carolina

## Briefs for the Files

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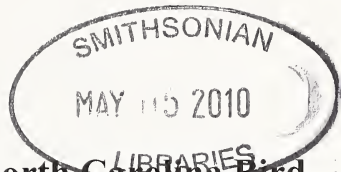
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## 2009 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

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**Harry E. LeGrand, Jr.<sup>1</sup>, Chair, Keith E. Camburn,  
Samuel Cooper, Richard J. Davis, Eric V. Dean,  
Wayne K. Forsythe, Jeffrey S. Pippen,  
Michael H. Tove, Russell L. Tyndall**

<sup>1</sup>N.C. Natural Heritage Program, 1601 MSC, Raleigh, NC 27699-1601

This report enumerates the decisions of the Carolina Bird Club's North Carolina Bird Records Committee during 2009. There were no changes to the membership of the committee during the year. Committee voting information is referenced in parentheses (i.e., year report received, reference number).

### Accepted as Valid

The reported identification is judged to be accurate, and the bird is judged to be of wild origin. Photographs and/or written descriptions of all accepted records have been deposited in the NC Museum of Natural Sciences.

**Tufted Duck** (*Aythya fuligula*) (09-05). A male, apparently a first-winter bird, was seen at a sewage treatment pond in Winston-Salem, Forsyth County, from 30 January to 14 February 2009, by several hundred observers (Hopkins et al. 2009). The Committee accepted written details by Marbry Hopkins and photos taken by Hopkins, David Disher, and John Haire. The Committee not only accepted the bird's specific identity but also considered it to have been a wild bird, in part because of its close association with several other diving duck species, the fact that several other reports of the species had been made farther northward in the same winter, and the lack of any evidence of local escapes from waterfowl breeders. This is the first state record, and acceptance of photos and its provenance places the species directly onto the Official List.

**Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel** (*Oceanodroma monorhis*) (09-16). One was seen approximately 36 miles off Cape Hatteras, Dare County on 6 June 2009 by a boatload of observers, including Brian Patteson and Steve Howell. The Committee accepted written details provided by Kevin Metcalf; however, the single photo of the bird was not accepted because the Committee felt that other dark-rumped species of storm-petrels could not be ruled out, even though no other such species are known to occur in the North Atlantic. This is the third North Carolina and United States record, all from this same general area. As the previous two records contained photos that were accepted by the Committee, the species is already on the Official List.

**Red-billed Tropicbird** (*Phaethon aethereus*) (09-14). An adult was seen in flight over a tidal pond at Cape Hatteras Point, Dare County, on 10 March 2009 by Pat and Neal Moore and Brian Patteson. The Committee accepted a photo taken by Patteson. Though there are several dozen offshore records, this appears to be the first state record of a bird seen from shore, and the appearance of one actually over land is quite exceptional.

**Roseate Spoonbill** (*Platalea ajaja*) (09-15). An immature was seen in the Catawba River, along the Catawba/Alexander County line on 11 August 2009 by Monroe Pannell. The Committee accepted a photo taken on 12 August by Dwayne Martin. Though there are numerous state records, this appears to be just the second for the piedmont, and the farthest inland record for the state.

**Snail Kite** (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) (09-08). An adult male was found dead in the Crusoe Island community in Columbus County on 10 April 2009 by a local citizen, and identified as this species by Keith Rogers. The bird bore leg bands; it had been banded in Florida in 1997. The Committee accepted photos of the specimen taken by John Hammond, and the bird is now a specimen at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences. This is a first state record and appears to be the northernmost record for the species; acceptance of the photos places the species onto the Official List.

**Mew (Common) Gull** (*Larus canus canus*) (09-02). An adult was seen by Wade Fuller, Rich Boyd, Bob Holmes, and Ken Wilkins at Cape Hatteras Point on 24 January 2009. It was found later in the day by several other birders, and Brian Patteson was able to photograph the bird. The Committee accepted Patteson's photos and the written description by Fuller. This represents the fourth accepted record for this European subspecies (all from this exact location) and the fifth overall for the species. Thus, the species is already on the Official List.

**Bell's Vireo** (*Vireo bellii*) (09-01). One was photographed at Fort Fisher, New Hanover County, on 1 October 2008 by James Parnell. This is the fourth accepted state record, the third for the coast in fall; these three records have all been documented by photos. Thus, the species is already on the Official List.

**Sprague's Pipit** (*Anthus spragueii*) (09-09). A most unusual record was one seen and photographed on a ship about 40 miles off the coast of Currituck County, on the surprisingly late date of 2 June 2009. The Committee accepted photos of the bird taken by Lauren Morgens. The species is already on the Official List; this is the third accepted state record but only the second with photos. The other two records are from the fall season, one from the coast and the other from the mountains. A few additional reports have not been accepted.

**Nashville Warbler** (*Vermivora ruficapilla*) (09-11). One was seen on 6 December 2008 at Charlotte, Mecklenburg County by Larry Barden and others. Though there are numerous records of the species for the state, including at least nine winter reports for coastal/tidewater areas and one

from the eastern edge of the piedmont, based on the Avendex database, this is apparently the first in winter from the western half of the state.

**Northern Waterthrush** (*Seiurus noveboracensis*) (09-04). One seen by Richard Brown and Kent Fiala, and photographed by Fiala, was found in a wooded area at Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge, Hyde County on 1 February 2009. The Committee accepted the photograph; this is the first documented winter record for the state, though there are six other winter reports for the state listed in the Avendex database. Most or all of these others may well be correctly identified but have not been reviewed by a records committee.

**Lesser Goldfinch** (*Spinus psaltria*) (09-07). One adult male of the dark-backed form was seen at Ross McGregor's feeders in Beaufort, Carteret County, from 2 to 4 March 2009. The Committee accepted both his written description and his photos. Acceptance of the photos elevates the species from the Provisional List to the Official List; this is the second state record, with the first being a sight record from the piedmont province.

### Unresolved

Further action by the Committee is needed.

**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** (*Calidris acuminata*) (09-12). An immature was reported at a sod farm in Craven County on 31 August 2009. This was a single-observer report, with no photographic documentation; however, there was enough of a written description that six of the nine Committee members accepted the report. However, as at least 75% of votes (at least seven) must be Accept as Valid to accept a record on a first vote, the voting verdict is "Send for Outside Review". There are no previous records of the species for the state, though both Virginia (at least four records—Rottenborn and Brinkley 2007) and South Carolina (one sight record—Carter and Eastman 1998) have the species on their state lists.

### Unaccepted Sighting

The bird is judged to be a species other than that reported, or the bird is insufficiently documented to identification of the species reported.

**Mottled Duck** (*Anas fulvigula*) (09-10). A pair was reported from a city park in the northeastern piedmont in December 2008. Though the description was adequate, and the birds were compared with nearby Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and American Black Ducks (*A. rubripes*), the Committee felt that the report was inadequately documented. There is a need for photos or exceedingly thorough details for such a difficult species to identify and for a location outside the expected range. The species is already on the Official List, with two accepted photographic records for the southern half of the coast.

**Northern Gannet** (*Morus bassanus*) (09-03). An adult reported in flight in the central piedmont, over a field, in January 2008 was not accepted. The



odd habitat, observer's inexperience with the species, and extreme rarity of the species away from salt water suggest that the bird was something else.

**Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk** (*Buteo jamaicensis harlani*) (09-13). A specimen at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences (NCSM 4504), collected in the winter of 1974–75 at Morrow Mountain State Park, Stanly County, had been labeled as a “Krider's” Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis krideri*). This is no longer considered to be a valid subspecies by the American Ornithologists' Union; rather, it is considered a pale color morph of several subspecies. In 2009, a noted hawk expert identified the specimen as a “juvenile light-morph Harlan's Hawk”, but without reasons for such a conclusion. However, because three photos (taken by Will Cook) of the specimen were available to the Committee for review, it was decided that a review could be done. Only three of nine members voted Accept as Valid. The general feeling of the majority of the Committee members was that the bird appears to be too pale overall even for a light-morph Harlan's. Because there were more than 50% non-accept votes, the identification as the Harlan's subspecies is not accepted. According to regulations, because “Inadequately Documented” received more non-accept votes than “Unaccepted Sighting” votes, the report can be sent back for more details and a second vote.

### Unaccepted Origin

The reported identification is judged to be accurate, but the origin of the bird is uncertain (and thus might not be of natural origin).

**Trumpeter Swan** (*Cygnus buccinator*) (09-06). An apparent family group of four birds—three adults and one immature—was seen at a small pond in southern Nash County on 21–22 February 2009 by Ricky Davis, Jeff Pippen, Clyde Sorenson, Harry LeGrand, and several other observers. The birds had been present for at least two weeks prior to this date, according to Matthew Ordess. Though the photos taken by Davis were accepted to this species, the fact that the birds were extremely tame led the Committee to a voting verdict of Questionable Origin. The species is already on the Official List, based on acceptance of photos and provenance of four birds banded at Pungo refuge in February 2004.

### Discussion

The review of reports by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee for 2009 resulted in adding three species to the state's Official List. Tufted Duck and Snail Kite are added directly to the Official List, whereas Lesser Goldfinch is elevated from the Provisional List (which decreases by one species). The current Official List is now 456 species, and the Provisional List is 13 species, for a total of 469 species on the state's Accepted List. Further Committee action is expected on the reports of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk.

### **Acknowledgments**

In addition to the many people named above who provided written material and photographs for the Committee to review, we thank Kent Fiala—webmaster of the Carolina Bird Club—for placing a number of the photographs on the club's website for Committee review and sending electronic submission of Rare Bird Report forms to the Committee chair.

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## 2009 Fall Bird Counts in South Carolina

---

### Lois Stacey

418 Deepwood Pl., North Augusta, SC, 29841

*croakie@comcast.net*

Fall migration counts were held in five counties in 2009. All counts reported cloud cover most of the day, and a few had light rain on and off. Still, 146 species and 13,699 individuals were recorded overall for the count.

A flock of 68 Brewer's Blackbirds was seen in Spartanburg County. All of the hawk species were seen, along with Bald Eagle, Osprey and American Kestrel. 20 Northern Bobwhite were seen and were included on the lists of three counties. There was a total of 23 species of warblers reported as well. An astounding 496 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were counted, with 411 in Greenville County alone!

Only two Pied-billed Grebes were counted and only one gull, a Ring-billed Gull. Only eight species of shorebirds were reported this year.

### County Summaries:

#### **Aiken County: 114 species, 5714 individuals**

Coordinator: Anne Waters  
1621 Apple Valley Drive  
Augusta, GA 30906

Participants: Matt Bost, Jesse Carlton, Dan Connelly, Brandon Cromer, Lee Dane, Larry Eldridge, Gary Gray, Paul Koehler, George Reeves, Chris Shaw, Lois Stacey, Mark Vukovich, Alice Walker, Doug Walker, Anne Waters, Eugene Zielinski, Calvin Zippler.

#### **Spartanburg County: 81 species, 2544 individuals**

Coordinator: Lyle Campbell  
126 Greengate Lane  
Spartanburg, SC 29307

Participants: Carole Anderson, Tim Brown, Dan Bryant, Lyle Campbell, Sarah Campbell, Vince Conners, Roy Fowler, Pat Fowler, Alan Gray, Nancy Gergen, Frank Hull, Phyllis Hull, Herb Kay, Doug Rayner, Mac Shealy, Gerald Thurmond, Lewanna Ulmer, M. B. Ulmer, Kay Whilden

#### **Cherokee County: 44 species, 318 individuals**

Coordinator: Lyle Campbell  
126 Greengate Lane  
Spartanburg, SC 29307

Participants: Claude Cobb, Carolyn Hanes, Karla Lavender, Maxi Nix, Tina Pearsall, Rebecca Poole

The Cherokee County count yielded low numbers, as six counters in two field parties and five yard and feeder-watchers managed 44 species and 318



individuals. Schedule conflicts prevented us from surveying the Cowpens National Battlefield, a standard locality good for a fair diversity of birds. The Bald Eagle seen on the Broad River was the best bird. (Lyle Campbell)

**Lexington County: 60 species, 1269 individuals**

Coordinator Molly Bonnell  
202 Cannon Trail Rd.  
Lexington, SC

Participants: Andrea Cecelski, Barbara Darden, Margaret Bergin, Greg Fitzpatrick, Molly Bonnell

**Greenville County: 93 species, 3854 individuals**

Coordinator: J. B. Hines  
5258 Chesnee Highway  
Chesnee, SC 29323

Participants: Paul Serridge, Barbara Serridge, Jane Kramer, Donnie Coody, Shelby Birch, Jerry Johnson, David Kirk, Judy Webb, Charles Webb, Hilda Reese, Al Reese, Jonathan Swink, Chip Gilbert, Sarah Gilbert

Table 1. Fall 2009 bird counts in South Carolina

	Aiken	Spart	Cherok	Lexing	Greenv	Total
Canada Goose	34	51	100	59	222	466
Wood Duck	11	1	0	13	44	69
Mallard	9	46	0	1	152	208
Blue-winged Teal	0	0	0	0	3	3
Northern Bobwhite	8	0	11	0	1	20
Wild Turkey	13	0	17	0	24	54
Pied-billed Grebe	1	0	0	0	1	2
Double-crested Cormorant	1	0	0	6	0	7
Anhinga	8	1	0	0	0	9
Great Blue Heron	6	10	2	3	12	33
Great Egret	34	3	0	3	3	43
Snowy Egret	8	0	0	0	0	8
Little Blue Heron	24	0	0	0	0	24
Cattle Egret	168	0	5	0	0	173
Green Heron	0	2	0	0	3	5
White Ibis	10	0	0	0	0	10
Wood Stork	32	0	0	0	0	32
Black Vulture	108	38	6	7	2	161
Turkey Vulture	56	67	4	11	39	177
Osprey	0	0	1	1	1	3
Bald Eagle (ad)	0	0	1	2	1	4
Bald Eagle (imm)	0	1	0	1	0	2
Northern Harrier	0	0	1	3	0	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	2	0	0	1	3
Cooper's Hawk	0	0	0	1	2	3
Accipiter, sp.	0	0	0	0	5	5
Red-shouldered Hawk	10	9	1	4	16	40
Broad-winged Hawk	0	1	0	0	2	3
Red-tailed Hawk	12	11	2	4	6	35
American Kestrel	5	0	1	1	3	10
Common Moorhen	8	0	0	0	0	8
American Coot	0	0	0	0	1	1

	Aiken	Spart	Cherok	Lexing	Greenv	Total
Killdeer	72	4	2	5	12	95
Spotted Sandpiper	1	0	0	0	0	1
Solitary Sandpiper	7	0	0	0	0	7
Lesser Yellowlegs	3	0	0	0	0	3
Western Sandpiper	1	0	0	0	0	1
Least Sandpiper	63	0	0	0	0	63
Pectoral Sandpiper	2	0	0	0	0	2
Wilson's Snipe	0	0	0	0	2	2
Ring-billed Gull	0	0	0	1	0	1
Rock Pigeon	54	279	13	122	25	493
Eurasian Collared-Dove	9	2	0	3	0	14
Mourning Dove	254	0	27	150	458	889
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	5	0	0	0	0	5
Eastern Screech-Owl	4	0	1	0	3	8
Great Horned Owl	4	1	0	0	2	7
Barred Owl	15	3	0	0	0	18
Common Nighthawk	6	1	0	0	1	8
Chimney Swift	86	490	6	11	409	1002
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	12	62	7	4	411	496
Belted Kingfisher	3	13	1	2	8	27
Red-headed Woodpecker	13	11	0	5	3	32
Red-bellied Woodpecker	64	26	2	36	38	166
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	0	1	0	0	0	1
Downy Woodpecker	28	15	0	2	17	62
Hairy Woodpecker	2	3	0	0	2	7
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	1	0	0	0	0	1
Northern Flicker	6	0	1	6	4	17
Pileated Woodpecker	33	3	1	4	10	51
Eastern Wood-Pewee	26	3	0	6	3	38
Acadian Flycatcher	13	0	0	3	0	16
Least Flycatcher	0	0	0	1	0	1
Eastern Phoebe	8	27	1	2	42	80
Great Crested Flycatcher	0	1	1	0	0	2
Eastern Kingbird	2	0	0	0	2	4
Loggerhead Shrike	1	0	0	0	0	1
White-eyed Vireo	55	4	0	12	8	79
Yellow-throated Vireo	3	0	0	3	0	6
Red-eyed Vireo	15	0	0	3	0	18
Blue Jay	113	135	1	65	152	466
American Crow	240	154	9	64	211	678
Fish Crow	63	0	0	0	20	83
Tree Swallow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	633	0	0	0	0	633
Bank Swallow	10	2	6	0	0	18
Cliff Swallow	2	0	0	0	0	2
Barn Swallow	62	0	0	0	0	62
Carolina Chickadee	141	46	0	44	49	280
Tufted Titmouse	120	57	5	28	41	251
White-breasted Nuthatch	22	12	6	0	17	57
Brown-headed Nuthatch	30	6	0	13	8	57
Carolina Wren	148	41	4	46	53	292
House Wren	1	3	0	0	1	5
Golden-crowned Kinglet	0	0	0	0	1	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	0	0	0	0	2
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	23	3	0	0	5	31
Eastern Bluebird	52	73	6	25	239	395
Veery	0	0	0	2	3	5

	Aiken	Spart	Cherok	Lexing	Greenv	Total
Gray-cheeked Thrush	0	1	0	0	0	1
Swainson's Thrush	0	0	0	0	3	3
Hermit Thrush	3	0	0	0	0	3
Wood Thrush	6	2	0	0	0	8
American Robin	1	100	4	24	86	215
Gray Catbird	4	9	0	1	22	36
Northern Mockingbird	86	58	8	104	82	338
Brown Thrasher	29	18	0	10	28	85
European Starling	286	209	12	12	166	685
Cedar Waxwing	0	8	0	0	83	91
Blue-winged Warbler	3	0	0	0	0	3
Tennessee Warbler	1	0	0	0	1	2
Nashville Warbler	0	0	0	1	0	1
Northern Parula	42	0	0	1	3	46
Chestnut-sided Warbler	16	0	0	0	4	20
Magnolia Warbler	7	2	0	0	6	15
Black-throated Blue Warbler	0	1	0	0	0	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1	6	0	0	0	7
Black-throated Green Warbler	0	0	0	0	2	2
Blackburnian Warbler	1	0	0	0	1	2
Yellow-throated Warbler	5	2	0	0	0	7
Pine Warbler	89	11	1	19	3	123
Prairie Warbler	2	0	0	0	0	2
Palm Warbler	1	2	0	0	0	3
Black-and-white Warbler	4	0	0	0	2	6
American Redstart	22	6	0	4	1	33
Prothonotary Warbler	1	0	0	0	0	1
Ovenbird	1	0	0	0	0	1
Northern Waterthrush	2	0	0	0	0	2
Louisiana Waterthrush	0	0	0	0	1	1
Common Yellowthroat	8	6	0	0	2	16
Hooded Warbler	2	0	0	1	1	4
Yellow-breasted Chat	2	2	0	0	2	6
Eastern Towhee	23	16	0	0	13	52
Chipping Sparrow	6	0	2	11	43	62
Field Sparrow	0	1	0	0	10	11
Song Sparrow	0	9	2	0	12	23
White-throated Sparrow	0	6	0	0	1	7
Sparrow, sp.		4	0	0	0	4
Summer Tanager	24	8	0	0	0	32
Scarlet Tanager	5	3	0	0	1	9
Northern Cardinal	203	110	17	0	85	415
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	0	1	0	0	4	5
Blue Grosbeak	30	0	0	0	5	35
Indigo Bunting	44	3	0	0	24	71
Painted Bunting	1	0	0	0	0	1
Red-winged Blackbird	64	0	0	0	0	64
Eastern Meadowlark	0	1	0	0	15	16
Brewer's Blackbird	0	68	0	0	0	68
Common Grackle	21	66	10	5	47	149
Brown-headed Cowbird	1532	1	4	250	12	1799
Orchard Oriole	3	0	0	0	2	5
Baltimore Oriole	1	0	0	1	2	4
Purple Finch	0	2	0	0	0	2
House Finch	16	29	2	22	51	120
American Goldfinch	2	40	2	6	224	274
House Sparrow	14	9	2	9	0	34



	Aiken	Spart	Cherok	Lexing	Greenv	Total
Total species	114	81	44	60	93	146
Total individuals	5714	2544	318	1269	3854	13,699
Observers	17	11	3	5	15	36
Parties	10	9	2	4		25
Hours foot	31.5	17	0.5	5	23.15	77.15
Hours car	24.75	14.5	2	10	14.5	65.75
Miles foot	13.25	15.5	0.5	6	7	42.25
Miles car	238	207	53	101	249	848
Hours feeder watch	4.5	25.5	11			41
# Feeder watchers	2	12	6			20
# Feeder stations	5	8	5			18
Hours nocturnal	2	1	1		0.75	4.75
Miles nocturnal	14	4	1		0.5	19.5
# Parties nocturnal	2	1	1		1	5
# Observers nocturnal	2	2	1		2	7
Start time	0500					
Finish time	1830					

## Fifty Years Ago in *The Chat*—March–June 1960

Publication of Volume 24 of *The Chat* was irregular, for reasons that were not recorded. Although four issues were published as usual, numbers 1 and 2 were published in a combined issue labeled “March–June”, then separate numbers 3-A and 3-B were published, and then finally number 4.

In the 1959 Christmas Count, 177 species were seen in the two states. A blackbird roost of 800,000 in Greensboro helped boost the individual count to a record high of 1.4 million. The compiler of the Charlotte count, B. R. Chamberlain, noted “Suitable birding areas rapidly disappearing”.

In an article “I Saw the World’s Rarest Bird!”, Jack P. Hailman described visiting the breeding colony of Bermuda Petrels with David Wingate, just nine years after the re-discovery of the species, previously thought extinct.

Fulvous Tree Ducks (now Fulvous Whistling-Ducks) were reported at Savannah River NWR (belatedly; a 1956 record) and at Orton Wildlife Refuge near Wilmington NC. The SC record was the second for the state. A Laughing Gull banded as a nestling at Oregon Inlet in 1959 was recovered in January 1960 in Cuba. Probably due to Hurricane Gracie, 21 American Golden-Plovers and a Red Phalarope were seen in North Wilkesboro, NC, in October 1959. It was thought to be the first record of American Golden-Plover in the western part of the state since 1886. A murre, tentatively identified as Thick-billed, was reported from Swan Quarter NWR. There were only three previous records for the state, none more recent than 1937. Greg Massey reported a Horned Lark at Wilmington, NC, apparently the first record for the area. A Black-billed Magpie was seen by several

(continued on page 15)

## General Field Notes

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*General Field Notes* briefly report such items as rare sightings, unusual behaviors, significant nesting records, or summaries of such items.

First, second, or third sightings of species in either state must be submitted to the appropriate Bird Records Committee prior to publication in *The Chat*.

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### The Second Record of Lesser Goldfinch (*Spinus psaltria*) for North Carolina

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During late winter 2008–2009, an increasing number of American Goldfinches (*Spinus tristis*) had been visiting feeders in my back yard in Beaufort, NC. There had also been an increasing number of Pine Siskins (*Spinus pinus*) with the American Goldfinches, peaking at 10 to 12 birds on the weekend of 28 February–1 March 2009.

On the morning of Monday, 2 March, I was about to leave for work when I had a last look at the American Goldfinch flock to see if there were still some Pine Siskins with them. On looking at the thistle seed feeder, I immediately saw a slightly smaller goldfinch with a black head and back and sulfur yellow under parts. I identified it straight away as a male Lesser Goldfinch (*S. psaltria*).

While the bird remained for the next three days, its arrival at the feeders was unpredictable and often very brief. Fortunately, many birders did manage to see and photograph the bird, thanks to the utility of the carolinabirds listserve.

The bird that was present from 2–4 March was of the black-backed form and appeared to be an adult male, which is even more distinctive and easier to identify than the green-backed forms. The black-backed forms are normally found in the eastern interior portion of their US range, while the green-backed forms are normally found along the West Coast. It appears that the variation across the forms is clinal, and the differences may not support subspecific distinctions (Willoughby 2007).

The bird at my feeders in Beaufort was a classically black-backed form with glossy black head, rear of the ear coverts, back, rump and upper tail coverts. The under parts from the chin to the undertail coverts were bright sulfur yellow, becoming very slightly paler under the tail (Fig. 1). The wings

were mostly glossy black with obvious white tips to the tertials and greater coverts (Fig. 2) . In flight, the white bases to inner primary and outer secondary remiges were obvious as a small white patch. The tail feathers were also glossy black with white patches on the outer edges at the base. On several occasions the tail shape could be seen clearly enough with a telescope to determine that the bird was an adult, based on the illustrations in Pyle (1997). Interestingly, the bill differed slightly from the illustration in Sibley (2000), having a whitish-gray lower mandible, rather than an all-dark bill. The legs were grayish-pink.



Figure 1. Lesser Goldfinch (right) with American Goldfinch (left), 14 March 2009, Beaufort, NC. Photo by Harry Sell.



Figure 2. Lesser Goldfinch, 14 March 2009, Beaufort, NC. Photo by Harry Sell.

There has been one previous, unconfirmed record of Lesser Goldfinch in the Carolinas: a single bird of the green-backed form reported from Winston-Salem, NC, on 27 September 1985 (Snively 1986). Therefore, this record represents the first record of the black-backed form for the Carolinas and the first confirmed record of the species. The NC Bird Records Committee



(LeGrand et al. 2010) has accepted photographs and a description of this Beaufort individual, and acceptance of photographs elevates the species from the Provisional List to the Official List.

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## Nesting of Anhingas (*Anhinga anhinga*) in Scotland County, North Carolina

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Breeding bird surveys from 1985 to 1991 show the summer distribution of the Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) just reaching into coastal South Carolina (Price 1995), although Pearson (1917) reported that the species' distribution included North Carolina.

Pearson et al. (1942) reported historical breeding records for Anhingas in North Carolina. The first report was in 1898 at Orton Lake in Brunswick County at the very southeastern edge of the state. It wasn't until 1931, 33 years later, that nesting was again reported at the same location. In 1932, a half dozen nesting pairs were reported within a Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) colony at Great Lake in Craven County. In 1935, Anhinga nesting was reported in Beaufort and Bladen counties.

More recently, Potter et al. (2006) wrote that Anhingas breed locally throughout the North Carolina coastal plain, inland approximately to the I-95 corridor near Weldon and southeast of Fayetteville. By 2006, the Anhinga's breeding range had expanded into coastal North Carolina as far north as Halifax County (Enders 2006), and Merrill Lynch reported an attempted nesting from inland Chatham County (Lynch 2006). Davis (2007) reported that nesting activity continues to occur further inland away from the usual coastal plain area.

This report will describe the successful nesting of Anhingas at Cypress Pond on land occupied by St. Andrews Presbyterian College in Laurinburg, Scotland County, North Carolina. While it is not an unexpected expansion of its breeding range, I believe this is the first documented nesting of Anhingas from Scotland County and the sandhills region of North Carolina. Cypress Pond is the smallest of three connected ponds. At one end of the pond there is a bridge that is a favorite fishing site and at the opposite end there is a cypress (*Taxodium sp.*) swamp growing in rather shallow water with a dense cover of water lily (*Nymphaea sp.*) and spatterdock (*Nuphar lutea*). In the taller trees, there is a small colony of five Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) nests.

My first observation of Anhingas nesting at this site occurred on 10 May 2009. The nest was almost complete. The male Anhinga would fly out into the cypress canopy, break off a twig, and transfer it to the female who would place it in the nest. Initially, two pairs of Anhingas were building nests at this site. The successful nest was built in the top branches of one of the smaller cypress trees about 12 to 15 feet above the water. The second nest was built between a branch and the trunk of a cypress tree 20 or more feet above the water. This nest appeared to be unstable and in a poor location; it eventually failed.

As the Anhingas were constructing the nest, they were also courting and copulating. Part of the courtship ritual included a very graceful dance of their necks as they stare into each other's eyes. The adult's eyes have green spectacles around them during the breeding season. Even after the nest was completed, the male would continue to pull a twig off of the cypress and juggle it in his beak until he dropped it. The first egg probably was laid around 16 May, and the first chick hatched 13 June, or 28 days later. Both the male and female took turns incubating. This nest held only two young.

As the eggs hatched, the adults would settle higher in the nest. In a few more days, the heads of the young were just above the edge of the nest with their bills wide open and constantly begging for food. The young have off-white bodies and downy light brown necks. By the beginning of July, the young were beginning to develop dark wing feathers. By the second week of July, their tail feathers had grown in, and they were beginning to pay more attention to each other.

On 16 July, there was a very violent storm with much rain and high winds and that was the last I saw of the nestlings for a while. Did the young survive the storm, or did they perish? Others have reported that at the end of three weeks, if threatened, Anhingas are able to drop down into the water and swim away (Kearns 2009). Every few days I would return to this site to look for them. Both of the adults stayed close to their nesting site, and so I was hoping that that indicated that the young were nearby as well.

Then on 16 August, one month after they had abandoned their nest, the young Anhingas reappeared, fully feathered and looking like adults. Both had plumage similar to an adult female; however, one had a light brown neck and breast while the other had a darker brown neck and breast. At this point,

the young were more than two months old. The adult birds were still nearby, but I saw no evidence that they were still feeding the young.

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### Fifty Years Ago in *The Chat*, continued from page 10

observers in Chapel Hill, NC, on 23 March 1960. It was conjectured that it had been “driven in this direction by the great blizzards that swept eastward across Texas earlier this month”. It was the first record for the state, except for an earlier bird that had been determined to be an escaped captive. Four Bullock’s Orioles, an adult male, a female, and two immature males, were seen by “scores” of observers during the winter of 1959–1960 in Morehead City, NC. This was thought to be the first record for the state. A flock of Red Crossbills seen in Greensboro on 16 Jan 1960 was thought to be the first observation of the species in the state since 1953. There were several reports of Common Redpolls in NC, including four near Bodie Island lighthouse. SC’s first specimen of Common Redpoll “was obtained when a single bird was crushed by a truck operating on Bull’s Island”. The only previous record for SC was a sight record in 1901. An “Oregon” Junco was collected in Zebulon, NC.

The complete membership directory of the Carolina Bird Club was published in this issue. It showed a total of 1210 members, a substantially larger number than today’s membership.—*Kent Fiala*



## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Fall 2009, unless otherwise noted)

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*Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.*

Winter	December 1–February 28	due March 20
Spring	March 1–May 31	due June 20
Summer	June 1–July 31	due August 20
Fall	August 1–November 30	due December 20

*Reports can be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you type them and list the sightings according to the birds in checklist order (not according to dates or locations). If you submit your report to me through e-mail, please type your report directly into the message or copy it from a word processing program directly into the message. You may also attach your file to the e-mail, but if you do, please let me know the program used and also send a second version saved as a text (.txt) file.*

*Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.*

*Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.*

*I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.*

*If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.*

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** Birds that are part of the wild, breeding population in Florida often wander into southern South Carolina. In Jasper County, seven were seen at the Savannah Spoil Site, 31 Aug (Steve Calver) and 30+ were counted in a water-lily-covered pond off SC-17, 2 Oct (Dennis Forsythe).

**Snow Goose:** Exceptionally early was an individual seen with a flock of Canada Geese around Eagle Springs, NC, 28 Aug (Michael McCloy) and 10 Sept (Jeff Beane, Todd Pusser). Somewhat early were three found at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), NC, 3 Oct (Bob Holmes, Rich Boyd, Wade Fuller).

**Ross's Goose:** Typically, a few of these small, rare geese are found in our region each winter, usually amidst flocks of more common geese. This November, one was photographed with a flock of Canada Geese in Surfside, SC, 3–4 Nov (Phil Turner, Jerry Kerschner, et al.) and two were found amidst a flock of Snow Geese at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, NC, 29 Nov (Ricky Davis).

**Brant:** This species is becoming more regular at Oregon Inlet, NC, where up to ten were seen from 21 Nov (Alan Kneidel) through the end of the period (multiple observers).

**Cackling Goose:** This small, former subspecies of Canada Goose was reported only once this period—an individual amongst a flock of Snow Geese at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, NC, 29 Nov (Ricky Davis).

**Mute Swan:** Thought by the observers to be of wild origin were the (up to) three birds at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 7 Aug–13 Oct (Steve Calver, Ellie Covington).

**Eurasian Wigeon:** A drake photographed at Pea Island NWR, NC, 19 Sept (Jeff Lewis) was not only early, but also still in basic plumage, a molt not expected in our region. Two drakes were seen at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 25 Oct (Ricky Davis), with at least one continuing through 22 Nov (Alan Kneidel). An individual found on Kerr Lake, NC, 3 Nov, provided the first record of the species for that reservoir (Adam D'Onofrio, *fide* Brian Bockhahn). A drake found on the Bodie Island, NC, Lighthouse Pond during the Wings over Water Festival (WOW) in early Nov, continued into winter (Kent Fiala, multiple observers). A drake, presumably the same bird seen there last winter, returned to Lilliput Pond in New Bern, NC, for the second winter in a row, 19 Nov (Al Gamache).

**Common Eider:** Possibly an indicator of a potential influx of this rare winter visitor into our region was the season's first sighting, that of an ADULT male, seen flying S over the ocean from Pea Island, NC, 6 Nov (Ricky Davis). Other sightings included two juveniles off S Bald Head Island, NC, 6 Nov (Maureen Dewire); five off Nags Head, NC, 14 Nov (Alan Kneidel); up to two females at Oregon Inlet, NC, 14 Nov into winter (Kneidel); two near the jetty at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 26 Nov (Ritch Lilly); and one at Shallotte Inlet, Brunswick Co, NC, 28 Nov (Taylor Piephoff).

**White-winged Scoter:** Three seen from Sandling Beach on Falls Lake, NC, during the "Big Sit", 12 Oct (Brian Bockhahn, et al.) provided the only inland report.

**Black Scoter:** A lone female was found at the inland location of Lake Brandt in Greensboro, NC, 17 Nov (Henry Link, George Wheaton).



Common Eider, 28 Nov 2009, Shallotte Inlet in Brunswick County, North Carolina. Photo by Taylor Piephoff.

**Long-tailed Duck:** Inland, a female was seen from Ebenezer Point on Jordan Lake, NC, 29 Nov (Robert Meehan, Steve Shultz, Scott Winton). Interestingly, a female was seen from the same location around the same time last year.

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Four were seen 1 Aug at Huntington Beach SP, SC, where, apparently, they had been present throughout the summer (Stephen Thomas). The 30 seen on Lake Julian in Skyland, NC, 18 Nov (Wayne Forsythe) provided a good count for that mountain location.

**Common Loon:** Apparently summering were individuals on Falls Lake, NC, throughout the period, originally discovered 30 June (Matt Daw, Randy Emmitt, Ali Iyob) and on the S end of Lake Norman, NC, 15 Aug, where, according to a local resident, the bird had been present for 3–4 weeks (Jeff Lemons). The 152 seen on Lake Julian in Skyland, NC, 15 Oct (Wayne Forsythe), provided an unusually high count for the mountain region.

**Eared Grebe:** An individual returned to the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 18 Sept, and four were present 29 Sept into winter (Steve Calver). One returned to the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in Goldsboro, NC, 19 Sept



(Eric Dean). One was seen on Falls Lake, NC, from the US-50 boat launch, 2 Oct (Brian Bockhahn).

**Cory's Shearwater:** A fantastic count of 400+ was had on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 21 Aug (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**White-faced Storm-Petrel:** One was briefly seen during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 17 Aug (Brian Patteson).

**White-tailed Tropicbird:** An adult with a full tail streamer was seen at close range during a fishing charter out of Hatteras, NC, 6 Sept (Brian Patteson).

**American White Pelican:** This species, which seems to be increasing in our region, apparently summered at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, where up to eight were seen throughout the period (Ricky Davis, Alan Kneidel). Arriving at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, in mid-July, numbers of this species grew to 174 by 12 Nov (Steve Calver). Eight to ten had arrived at Pea Island NWR, NC, by 23 Oct (Jeff Lewis), with the number growing to 30 by 25 Nov (Linda Ward). A flock of 20 was seen circling over Morehead City, NC, 26 Oct (Ron White, *vide* John Fussell). 40 were seen on Langley Pond in Langley, SC, 6–11 Nov (Gary Dexter, Lois Stacey, Dennis Forsythe, et al.). Nineteen were found on a small island just off Atlantic, NC, 27 Nov (Sean Williams).

**Anhinga:** Unusually far inland were the two seen at Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 19–21 Sept (John Scavetto, John Buckman). Somewhat late were individuals at Lake Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 4 Nov (Brian Bockhahn) and on a pond at St Andrews Presbyterian College in Laurinburg, NC, 15 Nov (Mark Gretch).

**Magnificent Frigatebird:** A juvenile was observed soaring 100–150 yards off Edisto Beach, SC, 9 Oct (Jason Giovannone), providing the season's only report of this tropical wanderer.

**American Bittern:** Notable for their inland location were individuals at Jackson Park in Hendersonville, NC, 25 and 27 Sept (John Lindfors); in a wetland in Harnett Co, NC, 21 Oct (Alan Kneidel); and at Lake Conestee Nature Park in Columbia, SC, 14–19 Nov (Shelby Birch, Jeff Catlin, *vide* Paul Serridge).

**Great Egret:** Notable high counts of this common species included 731 at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 18 Sept (Steve Calver) and 250 at the N end of Falls Lake, NC, 2 Oct (Brian Bockhahn).

**Little Blue Heron:** Some of the farther inland sightings included three in the Yanceyville Marsh in N Greensboro, NC, 1 Aug (Dennis Burnette); 20 juveniles on the New Hope Creek mudflats of Jordan Lake, NC, 22 Aug (Tom Driscoll, et al.); and one juvenile along the Catawba River at Riverbend Park in Conover, NC, 31 Aug (Dwayne Martin).

**Tricolored Heron:** Ten found on the New Hope Creek mudflats of Jordan Lake, NC, 22 Aug (Tom Driscoll, et al.) provided a great count for a location so far inland.

**Reddish Egret:** Post-breeding wanderers included two at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 1 Aug (Stephen Thomas), with one remaining 7 Nov (Ritch Lilly)

(see cover photo); a juvenile at Pea Island NWR, NC, 2–17 Aug (Jeff Lewis, David Abbott); a juvenile on the N end of Portsmouth Island, NC, 18 Aug (Abbott); two juveniles in the E inlet of Sunset Beach, NC, 30 Aug (Ricky Davis); a juvenile at the S end of Litchfield Beach, SC, 31 Aug (Paul Serridge); seven at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 9 Sept (Steve Calver); two on the E end of Shackleford Banks, NC, 20 Sept (John Fussell, et al.); and at least one at the Rachel Carson Preserve, just S of Beaufort, NC, throughout the period (Clyde Adkins, Paula Gillikin, et al., *fide* Fussell).

**White Ibis:** In the mountains, where this species is rare, juveniles were seen at Highlands Falls Country Club in Macon Co, NC, 2–4 Aug (Brock & Patty Hutchins) and in the Jonathan Creek area of Haywood Co, NC, 5–7 Aug (Joanne Strop, Ann Putnam, *fide* Paul Super). The relative dates and locations of these two sightings suggest that both sightings involved the same bird. Also locally unusual were two juveniles photographed at Pee Dee NWR, NC, 29 Aug (Michael McCloy, Cassie Willis).

**Glossy Ibis:** An individual was found on Falls Lake, NC, 18 Aug (Dave Lenat), providing the farthest inland report.

**Roseate Spoonbill:** Continuing from post-breeding dispersal in late summer, unprecedented numbers of this species were found in our region. Present throughout the period at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, and Huntington Beach SP, SC, high counts reached 372 on 9 Sept (Steve Calver) and 11 on 10 Sept (Jerry Kerschner), respectively. Up to four were present around Twin Lakes in Sunset Beach, NC, in September (Greg Massey, Mary McDavit, et al.). Three at Pea Island NWR, NC, 16 Sept (Jay Ross, *fide* Jeff Lewis), with two continuing until 20 Oct (Linda Ward), provided the most northern report for the Carolinas. Farthest inland was an individual at Riverbend Park in Conover, NC, 11–12 Aug (Monroe Pannell, Dwayne Martin), providing the state's second record of this species outside the coastal plain.



Roseate Spoonbills, 14 Oct 2009, Huntington Beach SP, SC. Photo by Jerry Kerschner.

**Wood Stork:** Sightings of post-breeding wanderers included a first-year bird photographed at a pond in S Person Co, NC, 12 Aug (David Cox, *vide* Harry LeGrand); a kettle of about 40 birds over US-74 near Lumber River SP in Robeson Co, NC, 22 Aug (Ed Corey, David Cooper); 26, including adults and juveniles, in Boykin, SC, 28 Aug (Lex Glover); 36, including adults and juveniles, at Congaree NP, SC, 9 Sept (Lex Glover, Curtis Walker); and two juveniles at Pee Dee NWR, NC, 10 Sept (*vide* Susan Campbell), a first for the refuge. High counts at traditional sites were 105 around Twin Lakes in Sunset Beach, NC, 26 Aug (Mary McDavit); about 200 at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 26–30 Aug (Phil Turner, Paul Serridge, et al.); and 414 at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 9 Sept (Steve Calver).

**Northern Harrier:** The summering individual continued on Bodie Island, NC, 2 Aug (Jeff Lewis). Early to arrive were the individuals seen at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 7 Aug (Steve Calver) and at the N end of Falls Lake, NC, 23 Aug (Matt Daw).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** Locally unusual were the two seen at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 21 Aug (Steve Calver).

**“Krider’s” Red-tailed Hawk:** This pale morph was photographed at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 23 Nov (Steve Calver).

**Merlin:** There was a definite migratory movement of this species through the NC mountains in late September, with sightings of two at Carver’s Gap on Roan Mountain, NC, 23 Sept (Rick Knight); one at Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 23 Sept (Wayne Forsythe, Bob Olthoff); a juvenile along the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) in Haywood Co, NC, 24 Sept (Chris Kelly); one in Weaverville, NC, 29 Sept (Steve Semanchuk); and one at the Ridge Junction Overlook along the BRP, 3 Oct (Ricky Davis). Seven at Cape Lookout, NC, 20 Sept (John Fussell, et al.) provided a good one-day count.

**Black Rail:** It was seen at very close range in the impoundments on Bear Island, Charleston Co, SC, 31 Oct (Michael Bernard).

**King Rail:** Locally unusual was one found at Lake Phelps, NC, 24 Nov (Brian Bockhahn, Ali Iyoob, et al.).

**Sora:** Six found in flooded fields along Hooper Lane in Henderson Co, NC, 21 Sept (Wayne Forsythe), provided a good count for the mountain region.

**Purple Gallinule:** Good counts were had at the Savannah NWR, SC, with 16 adults and “as many” chicks, 7 Aug (Cherrie Sneed) and 40, including adults, juveniles, and chicks, 1 Sept (Brenda Brannen, Sandy Beasley).

**Common Moorhen:** Locally unusual was one found at Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, 16 Aug (Ali Iyoob).

**Sandhill Crane:** One photographed in a cornfield about 15 miles N of Rockingham, NC, 23 Sept (Mitch Binnarr) and four seen flying E-SE over SE Asheville, NC, 29 Nov (Chris Kelly) were the only cranes mentioned this fall.

**Black-bellied Plover:** Inland reports of this species included one on the mudflats at the upper end of Falls Lake, NC, 18 Aug (Ali Iyoob, Matt Daw) through 1 Sept (Dave Lenat); one on the mudflats in the New Hope area of Jordan Lake, NC, 8–21 Sept (Alan Kneidel, Doug Shadwick, Mark



Kosiewski); five in the fields along Hooper Lane in Henderson Co, NC, 31 Aug (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey); one, quite late, at the same location, 11 Nov (Wayne Forsythe); and one, also quite late, at the Super-Sod farm in Orangeburg, SC, 12 Nov (Jeff Lemons). The 875 seen at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 25 Oct (Ricky Davis) provided an excellent count for that somewhat inland location.

**American Golden-Plover:** Some of the better counts of this fall migrant included nine at the sod farm in Creswell, NC, 6 Sept (Ricky Davis); two at the sod farm in Turbeville, SC, 6 Sept (Lex Glover); 59 (!) in heavily flooded fields along Hooper Lane in Henderson Co, NC, 21 Sept (Wayne Forsythe); five on the New Hope Creek mudflats at Jordan Lake, NC, 17 Oct (Steve Shultz); and ten at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 25 Oct (Davis). Also found were individuals at the upper end of Falls Lake, NC, 1 Sept (Dave Lenat); at a sod farm in New Bern, NC, 4 Sept (Al Gamache); at the NPS campground in Buxton, NC, 8 Sept (Brian Patteson); at Pea Island NWR, NC, 30 Sept (Jeff Lewis); and at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 30 Oct (Steve Calver, Ellie Covington). Three found on a sandbar just W of Pivers Island, near Beaufort, NC, 7 Aug (Ross McGregor) were somewhat early, while two found on Pelican Island, just W of Oregon Inlet, NC, 7 Nov (Brian Bockhahn, Lewis, et al.) were somewhat late.

**Snowy Plover:** An individual in non-breeding plumage was discovered at the S point of Ocracoke Island, NC, 15 Sept (Sidney Maddock, *fide* Jeff Lewis). Interestingly, Maddock found a Snowy Plover at the same location on 17 Sept 2009!

**Semipalmated Plover:** Notable inland reports were of three along Jeffress Rd in Hendersonville, NC, 31 Aug (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey); 50+ at the upper end of Falls Lake, NC, 1 Sept (Dave Lenat); and 13 at Jordan Lake, NC, 19 Sept (*fide* Will Cook).

**Piping Plover:** Some of the higher counts of this threatened species were 117 at the N end of Portsmouth Island, NC, 18 Aug (David Abbott); 13 on Bear Island at Hammocks Beach SP, NC, 3 Sept (Al Gamache); 14 on Kiawah Island, SC, 25 Oct (Carl Miller); and 16, including six color-banded birds from the endangered Great Lakes population, on the S end of Topsail Island and N end of Lea/Hutaff Island, Pender Co, NC, 8 Nov (Gilbert Grant).

**Black-necked Stilt:** Seven at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 8 and 16 Aug (Ricky Davis) were unusual for that inland location. The 173 seen at the W end of the Georgetown Impoundments in Georgetown Co, SC, 23 Aug (David Abbott) were a good count.

**American Avocet:** Inland sightings of this species are rare, and thus of interest were the reports of one at the upper end Falls Lake, NC, 13 Aug (Dave Lenat) through 29 Aug (Ricky Davis); one along the Catawba River at Riverbend Park in Conover, NC, 22 Aug (Monroe Pannell, *fide* Dwayne Martin); and four, photographed, at Archie Elledge WTP in Winston-Salem, NC, 8 Sept (Phil Dickinson). Coastal region high counts included 123 at

Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 25 Oct (Ricky Davis) and 1014 at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 30 Oct (Steve Calver, Ellie Covington).



American Avocets, 8 Sept 2009, Archie Elledge WTP, Winston-Salem, NC. Photo by Phil Dickinson.

**Spotted Sandpiper:** One found near the dam on Falls Lake, NC, 3–4 Nov (Matt Daw, Ali Iyoob) was somewhat late for that inland location.

**Willet:** The farthest inland Willet sighting made this fall was of one in the Seaforth area of Jordan Lake, NC, 13 Aug (Ginger Travis).

**Upland Sandpiper:** The best counts of this migrant “grasspiper” were six at the Super-Sod farm in Orangeburg, SC, 17 Aug (Jeff Lemons); eight at the same location 23 Aug (Michael McCloy, et al.); 13 at the American Turf Co. sod farm in Creswell, NC, 27–29 Aug (John Register, Jeff Lewis); and four at the sod farm in Turbeville, SC, 29 Aug (Lex Glover, David Dobson). Individuals were also found at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, 2 and 23 Aug (John Fussell, et al.) and in a field in Townville, SC, 14 Aug (Jeff O’Connell, Anne Baker).

**Whimbrel:** The only inland reports of this species came from Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, where one was seen 8 Aug (Ricky Davis) and 30 Aug (John Haire) and two were seen 25 Oct (Davis). Along the coast, some of the better concentrations were 12 on Shackleford Banks, NC, 7 Aug (Ross McGregor); 28+ on the mudflats along Folly Rd in Charleston, SC, 9 Aug (Chris Snook); and 16 feeding in rain puddles at the airport in Beaufort, NC, 8 Sept (Rich & Susan Boyd).

**Long-billed Curlew:** One found amongst a flock of Marbled Godwits on the N end of Portsmouth Island, NC, 18 Aug (David Abbott) provided the period’s only report.

**Hudsonian Godwit:** An individual was seen at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 1 Aug (Jeff Lewis) through 20 Sept (Ricky Davis), and two were at the same location 25 Oct (Davis). Fifteen (!) were seen “feeding in a deep rain pool across from the Hatteras Island KOA” campground in Rodanthe, NC, 8 Sept (Brian Patteson), providing the highest count of this species in several years. Interestingly, none were reported from Pea Island NWR, NC, this fall.

**Marbled Godwit:** The only inland sightings of this species were made at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, where three were seen 8 Aug and 20 Sept (Ricky Davis), and 21 were present by 25 Oct (Davis).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** Inland sightings were made of a breeding-plumaged male at the upper end of Falls Lake, NC, 12 Aug (Brian Bockhahn) through 22 Aug (Ali Iyooob); an individual on the upper end flats of Roanoke Rapids Lake, NC, 17 Oct (Ricky Davis); and three at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 25 Oct (Davis).

**Red Knot:** This sandpiper is very rarely found away from the immediate coast, and thus of interest were sightings of one at a sod farm in New Bern, NC, 13 Aug (Bob Holmes); “three to four” at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 30 Aug (Audrey Whitlock, John Haire); eight at the same location, 20 Sept (Ricky Davis); and 15 there on 25 Oct (Davis).



Sanderling, 31 Aug 2009, Henderson Co, NC. Photo by Wayne Forsythe.

**Sanderling:** Inland sightings included two at the upper end of Falls Lake, NC, 25 Aug (Dave Lenat) through 13 Sept (Gordon Brown, Steve Dinsmore); one at the Super-Sod farm in Orangeburg, SC, 30 Aug (Paul Serridge); one along Hooper Lane in Henderson Co, NC, 31 Aug (Wayne Forsythe); and nine on the New Hope Creek mudflats at Jordan Lake, NC, 12 Sept (Bruce Young, et al.).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** Some of the better counts of this uncommon peep were nine at the upper end of Falls Lake, NC, 25 Aug (Dave Lenat); two in the fields along Hooper Lane in Henderson Co, NC, 31 Aug (John Lindfors); two at Jordan Lake, NC, 18 Sept (Lenat); and 17 at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 25 Oct (Ricky Davis).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** In the Carolinas, this rare migrant sandpiper is almost exclusively found only during fall migration. This year's reports were of three, “well-seen...at rest and in flight”, at Pea Island NWR, NC, 17 Aug (David Abbott); up to four at the Super-Sod farm in Orangeburg, SC, 30 Aug (Paul Serridge, John Buckman, et al.); one at the Tar River Reservoir, Nash Co, NC, 5 Sept (Ricky Davis); one at Falls Lake, NC, 13 Sept (Gordon Brown, Steve Dinsmore); two at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 20 Sept (Ricky



Davis); and three along Hooper Lane in Henderson Co, NC, 1 Sept (Wayne Forsythe).

**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper:** A report of a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at a sod farm in Craven Co, NC, 31 Aug (Bob Holmes), has been submitted to the NC Bird Records Committee. If accepted, this sighting will provide the first documented sighting of this species for North Carolina.

**Dunlin:** Inland reports included three in the fields off Hooper Lane in Henderson Co, NC, 14–15 Oct (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey) with one remaining 11 Nov; six on the New Hope Creek mudflats at Jordan Lake, NC, 14 Oct (Jacob Socolar); and 19 on the mudflats at Lake Townsend, NC, 28 Oct (Henry & Elizabeth Link). An extraordinary count of 3800 was made at Mattamuskeet, NC, 25 Oct (Ricky Davis).

**Curlew Sandpiper:** An adult female was found on the beach on the E side of Portsmouth Island, NC, 18 Aug (David Abbott) providing the first report of this rare Eurasian stray in over two years.

**Stilt Sandpiper:** Impressive numbers were had at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, where 420 were seen 8 Aug and 340 were seen 25 Oct (Ricky Davis); on the New Hope Creek mudflats of Jordan Lake, NC, where 75+ were seen 13 Sept (Steve Shultz); and at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, where 200 were counted 23 Nov (Steve Calver).

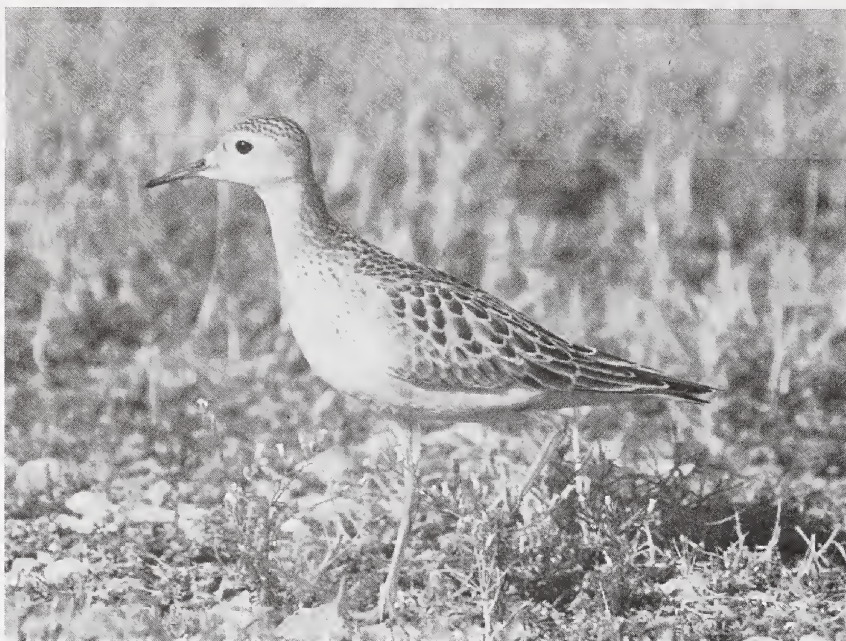
**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** The best counts of this grass/mud-piper were 14 at the American Turf Co. sod farm in Creswell, NC, 12 Sept (Allen Bryan); two at the sod farm in Turbeville, SC, 29 Aug (Lex Glover, David Dobson); five along Hooper Lane in Henderson Co, NC, 31 Aug (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey); three at the upper end of Falls Lake, NC, 6 Sept (Mark Kosiewski); and four on the New Hope Creek mudflats of Jordan Lake, NC, 12–14 Sept (Bruce Young, Mark Kosiewski, et al.). Individuals were also found at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 8 and 16 Aug (Ricky Davis) and again 27 Aug (Ali Iyooob, Dave Lenat); at a sod farm in New Bern, NC, 31 Aug–1 Sept (Bob Holmes, Al Gamache); on S Topsail Beach, NC, 9 Sept (Angela Mangiameli); at the Super-Sod farm in Orangeburg, SC, 13 Sept (Paul Serridge); near Ashley High School in Wilmington, NC, 24 Sept (John Ennis); and in Sunset Beach, NC, 2 Oct (Ennis).

**Ruff:** This rare Eurasian stray was reported twice in the Carolinas this fall. A sub-adult was photographed at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 27 Aug (Ali Iyooob, Dave Lenat) and remained for only a day, as it was last seen 28 Aug (Al Gamache). One in non-breeding plumage was found on the Morgan Creek



Baird's Sandpiper, 1 Sept 2009, Henderson Co, NC. Photo by Wayne Forsythe.

mudflats of Jordan Lake, NC, during the Chatham Co Fall Bird Count (FBC), 19 Sept (Doug Shadwick, Scott Winton, *fide* Will Cook), but was not subsequently relocated.



Buff-breasted Sandpiper, 2 Oct 2009, Sunset Beach, NC. Photo by John Ennis.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** This rare but regular fall migrant was found at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 8 Aug and 20 Sept (Ricky Davis); on the New Hope Creek mudflats of Jordan Lake, NC, during the Chatham Co FBC, 19 Sept (Doug Shadwick, *fide* Will Cook); and at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, where two were seen 7 Aug, an amazing count of 12 (!) was made 31 Aug, and one was seen 30 Oct (Steve Calver).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** Rarely found inland, a Red-necked Phalarope was photographed at the Archie Elledge WTP in Winston-Salem, NC, 24 Aug (John Haire, Carol Cunningham).

**Black-headed Gull:** Three of these rare Eurasian vagrants were found in the Carolinas this fall—one in Sanderling, NC, 29 Oct (Ben Watkins, *fide* Jeff Lewis); one photographed at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 12 Nov (Steve Calver, Ellie Covington); and an adult near the causeway at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 29 Nov (Ricky Davis).

**Laughing Gull:** Locally unusual was a flock of five birds on Falls Lake, NC, 12 Oct (Brian Bockhahn); at the same location 29 Oct (Ricky Davis); and on Lake Crabtree in Morrisville, NC, 18 Nov (Steve Shultz). One could assume that the same five birds accounted for all three sightings.



**Franklin's Gull:** An adult found at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, at the S end of the causeway, 25 Oct (Ricky Davis) was the fall's only report of this gull from the Great Plains.

**Herring Gull:** Four were "forced down in bad weather" to the WTP in Henderson Co, NC, 18 Nov (Wayne Forsythe, Vin Stanton), providing a rare mountain report of this species.



Red-necked Phalarope, 24 Aug 2009, Archie Elledge WTP, Winston-Salem, NC. Photo by John Haire.

**Gull-billed Tern:** A large congregation of 102 birds, including a disturbingly low ratio of juveniles, only four, was noted at Davis Impoundment in Carteret Co, NC, 9 Aug (John Fussell, et al.).

**Caspian Tern:** Some of the more notable counts of this species included 145 at the W end of the Georgetown Impoundments in Georgetown Co, SC, 23 Aug (David Abbott); 212 at the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, 18 Sept (Steve Calver); and 275 at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 25 Oct (Ricky Davis).

**Black Tern:** Noteworthy were the inland counts of 12 at Lake Julian in Skyland, NC, 19 Aug (Simon Thompson, Tom Joyce); 44 near the dam on Falls Lake, NC, 23 Aug (Matt Daw); and 15 at the N end of Jordan Lake, NC, 8 Sept (Alan Kneidel). Coastal high counts included 510 flying S over the surf in Kitty Hawk, NC, 19 Aug (David Abbott) and 70+ over the ocean off Fort Macon in Atlantic Beach, NC, 22 Aug (Dave Lenat).



**Roseate Tern:** Two adults were “well-studied” as they flew S over the surf in Kitty Hawk, NC, 16 Aug (David Abbott), providing the fall’s only report.

**Common Tern:** One was seen perched on a buoy on Lake Julian in Skyland, NC, 15 Oct (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey), providing a rare mountain report of this species.

**Black Skimmer:** One seen at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 8 Aug (Ricky Davis) was the farthest inland skimmer reported this fall.

**Parasitic Jaeger:** Two were reported this fall—a juvenile off Wrightsville Beach, NC, 30 Oct (Dean Edwards) and an adult flying S off Pea Island, NC, 5 Nov (Ricky Davis).

**White-winged Dove:** This stray from the southwestern US was seen perched on a telephone wire near the British Cemetery in Ocracoke, NC, 18 Aug (David Abbott) and visiting a feeder in Goldsboro, NC, 9–13 Nov (Mark Simpson, Eric Dean).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** Individuals were found at Crabtree Meadows, NC, off the BRP, 8 Aug (Taylor Piephoff); in a yard in Watauga Co, NC, 9 Aug (Merrill Lynch); at Bethabara Park in Winston-Salem, NC, 2 Sept (Phil Dickinson); along the BRP at Hefner Gap, NC, 8 Sept (William Haddad, et al.); at Jackson Park in Hendersonville, NC, 14–19 Sept (Wayne Forsythe, Jon Smith); in a yard in Weaverville, NC, 23–25 Sept (Steve Semanchuk); at 17 Acre Woods in Durham, NC, 1 Oct (Robert Meehan); along the BRP at the Ridge Junction Overlook, NC, 3 Oct (Ricky Davis); and at Riverbend Park in Conover, NC, 3 Oct (John Buckman, Ron Clark, et al.).

**Short-eared Owl:** One was well observed hunting over a field at dusk on Hooper Bald in Graham Co, NC, 1 Nov (Tom Howe, *fide* Dean Edwards). Sightings of this species in the NC mountains are quite rare.

**Chuck-will’s-widow:** One photographed while roosting in a tree at Jackson Park in Hendersonville, NC, 1 Sept (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey) was unusual for the mountain location.

**Chimney Swift:** Two were seen in Rocky Mount, NC, on the very late date of 15 Nov (Ricky Davis).

**Black-chinned Hummingbird:** A juvenile male visited a feeder on James Island, SC, 31 Oct through the end of the period, where it was also banded (John Weinstein).

**Calliope Hummingbird:** An adult male visited a feeder in Seven Lakes, NC, 17–21 Nov (Dick & Lois Dole, *fide* Susan Campbell) and was photographed.

**Rufous Hummingbird:** The fall’s reports were of a male in Carolina Shores, NC, 2 Aug, returning for the sixth season in a row (Jo O’Keefe, *fide* Susan Campbell); a female at a feeder in North Wilkesboro, NC, 31 Aug (Ary Bottoms); one at a feeder in Myrtle Beach, SC, 6 Sept (Phil Turner); a female near the dam on Falls Lake, NC, 8 Sept (Matt Daw, Ali Iyoob); and a first-year male in Southern Pines, NC, 16 Nov (Wayne & Fran Irvin).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** This rare migrant was seen hawking insects from an exposed perch along the BRP, just N of Crabtree Meadows, NC, 8 Aug

(Jon Smith); heard in a yard in Zebulon, NC, 10 Aug (Harry Wilson); and seen in a yard in Black Mountain, NC, 17 Sept (Stu Gibeau).

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** Reports of this rare transient *Empidonax* included one captured in a mist-net and banded at Weymouth Woods in Southern Pines, NC, 9 Sept, providing a second record of this species for the park (Susan Campbell, Michael McCloy); two seen at Jackson Park in Hendersonville, NC, 12 Sept (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey, Peggy Franklin); one well-studied along the Bethabara Greenway in Winston-Salem, NC, 14 Sept (John Haire); one seen and heard calling at Riverbend Park in Conover, NC, 21 Sept (Dwayne Martin), providing the first park record; one seen and heard at Ribbonwalk Nature Preserve in Mecklenburg Co, NC, 21 Sept (Tom Sanders); and one seen and heard calling at Hickory Top Waterfowl Management Area in Clarendon Co, SC, 26 Sept (Lex Glover, David Dobson).

**Alder Flycatcher:** One was captured in a mist-net, banded, and identified in-hand, at the Light House Creek Heritage Preserve in Charleston Co, SC, in mid-Sept (Chris Snook). If accepted by the Bird Records Committee, this will provide the state with its first and long overdue record of this species.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher:** One was found at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, 1 Nov (Jack Fennell, John Fussell).

**Western Kingbird:** A few of these birds are found along the coast each fall. This year, one was seen near the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse in Buxton, NC, where it was photographed 30 Sept (*vide* Nathan Swick); one at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, where it was photographed 13 Oct (Steve Calver, Ellie Covington); and one at Fort Raleigh in Manteo, NC, during a WOW field trip, 6–7 Nov (Jeff Lewis), also photographed.

**Loggerhead Shrike:** Locally unusual was an individual seen along a busy roadway in Brevard, NC, 15 Sept (Tom Joyce).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** In the Carolinas, this uncommon migrant is much more



Western Kingbird, 6 Nov 2009, Fort Raleigh, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

often found in fall than in spring. This year, individuals were found in Buxton Woods, Buxton, NC, 12 Sept (Ricky Davis); near the dam on Falls Lake, NC, 21–29 Sept and 8 Oct (Matt Daw, Ali Iyooob); at the Big Bald banding station in Yancey Co, NC, 25 Sept (Chris Kelly); at Jackson Park in Hendersonville, NC, 27 Sept (John Lindfors); at Bethabara Park in Winston-Salem, NC, 30 Sept (Ron Morris); at Latta Park in Charlotte, NC, 1 Oct (Tom Sanders, et al.); at Owen Park in Swannanoa, NC, 3 Oct (Ricky

Davis); along the BRP, N of Craggy Gardens, NC, 4 Oct (Ricky Davis); and at Jackson Park, 10 Oct (Ernie Hollingsworth).

**Fish Crow:** Continuing their expansion into the western parts of our region, three Fish Crows were seen and heard calling near the airport in Asheville, NC, 13 Sept (Wayne Forsythe).

**Common Raven:** Sightings of ravens away from the mountains included one just N of Greensboro, NC, 20 Sept (Dennis Burnette); one at Penny's Bend Preserve, NE of Durham, NC, 25 Sept (Harry LeGrand); two in Winston-Salem, NC, 30 Sept (Ron Morris); two just N of Sanford, NC, 6 Oct (Parker Backstrom); one in downtown Raleigh, NC, 20 Oct (John Connors); and one near the dam on Falls Lake, NC, 19–20 Nov (Ali Iyoob, Matt Daw).

**Horned Lark:** A peak count of 100 was made at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, 16 Aug (John Fussell, et al.), but, as typical, only a handful remained in Sept.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Two were seen over East Lake in Sunset Beach, NC, on the very late date of 28 Nov (Taylor Piephoff).

**Cave Swallow:** Reports of this rare vagrant, which is most often found in late fall, seemed to be down this year. Thirteen, the season's high count, were seen foraging over the small pond next to the ferry terminal in Cedar Island, NC, 27 Nov (Sean Williams). At least one was seen over East Lake in Sunset Beach, NC, 28 Nov (Taylor Piephoff). An individual was found amongst a Tree Swallow flock over a catfish farm in Roper, NC, 29 Nov (Ricky Davis).

**Barn Swallow:** Late to depart our region were four over the lighthouse pond on Bodie Island, NC, 14 Nov (Alan Kneidel); one over a catfish farm in Roper, NC, 29 Nov (Ricky Davis); and several over the pond next to the ferry terminal at Cedar Island, NC, 29 Nov (Harry Sell).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** One was seen at Lake Conestee Nature Park in Greenville, SC, 16 Nov through the end of the period (Shelby Birch, Donnie Coody, *fide* Paul Serridge). Gnatcatchers don't often over-winter at a site so far from the coast.

**Golden-winged Warbler:** Migrants found away from the mountains included a female, seen briefly, at Reynolda Gardens in Winston-Salem, NC, 1 Sept (Phil Dickinson); an adult male near the dam on Falls Lake, NC, 21–25 Sept (Matt Daw, Ali Iyoob); one in the Bates Fork tract of Congaree NP, SC, 4 Oct (Gary Sowell, John Grego); and one in the primitive camping area of Huntington Beach SP, SC, 6 Oct (Ritch Lilly).

**Nashville Warbler:** Migrants found away from the mountains included one at Sandling Beach on Falls Lake, NC, 16 Sept (Brian Bockhahn); one at Pea Island NWR, NC, 13 Sept, and two there 29 Sept (Jeff Lewis, et al.); one at Duke Forest in Durham, NC, 26 Sept (Nathan Swick); one at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, 30 Sept and 11 Oct (John Fussell, et al.); one at Fort Macon in Atlantic Beach, NC, 1 Oct (Fussell); and one near the dam on Falls Lake, NC, 7 Oct (Ali Iyoob). Five seen at Jackson Park in



Hendersonville, NC, 30 Sept (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey) provided a great one-day count of this species for our region.

**Northern Parula:** Noteworthy for sheer volume was the half-day count of about 200 made around Mattamuskeet, NC, 20 Sept (Ricky Davis).

**Cerulean Warbler:** Rarely found outside the mountains, a first-fall Cerulean was seen at Reynolda Gardens in Winston-Salem, NC, 25 Aug (John Haire).

**Northern Waterthrush:** One found on the W side of Lake Phelps, NC, 24 Nov (Brian Bockhahn) was either a late migrant or possibly an overwintering bird.

**Connecticut Warbler:** Only one was reported this fall—an individual well-seen at Buxton Woods, Buxton, NC, 6 Oct (Henry & Elizabeth Link).

**Mourning Warbler:** A female was found at Reynolda Gardens in Winston-Salem, NC, 27 Aug (Phil Dickinson). As is often the case with this species, subsequent attempts to locate this bird were unsuccessful.

**Wilson's Warbler:** Noteworthy sightings included a male near the dam on Falls Lake, NC, 5 Sept (Ali Iyoob); one in the Roanoke Gardens in Manteo, NC, 29 Sept (Jeff Lewis); a female near the dam on Falls Lake, NC, 7–12 Oct (Matt Daw, Ali Iyoob); and one at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 17 Oct (Ron Clark, et al.).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Individuals found near the dam on Falls Lake, NC, 3 Nov (Matt Daw) and along Leggett Rd, just E of Rocky Mount, NC, 15 Nov (Ricky Davis) were somewhat late.

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** A small number of these transients from the Great Plains visit our region each fall and winter. This fall, individuals were found at the NPS campground in Frisco, NC, 4 Oct (Brian Patteson); in Hatteras, NC, 6 and 8 Oct (Patteson); at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 17 Oct (Steve Calver); in a private field in New Bern, NC, 17 Oct (Al Gamache); and one at Fort Fisher, NC, where it was photographed, 3 Nov (Amy Williamson).

**Vesper Sparrow:** Six found at Dinkins Bottoms in E Yadkin Co, NC, 9 Nov (John Haire) provided a good count of this declining species. Two were seen at Sutton Lake in Wilmington, NC, where this species has now been seen for four winters in a row, 17 Nov (John Ennis).

**Lark Sparrow:** Individuals were found at the NPS campground in Buxton, NC, 9 Sept (Jeff Lewis); at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, 30 Sept (John Fussell); and in Williamston, NC, 28 Nov (Ed Corey).

**Savannah Sparrow:** Unusual for the mountain location was one found along the BRP at the Ridge Junction Overlook, NC, 3 Oct (Ricky Davis).

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** One found at the Beaverdam Lake spillway on Falls Lake, NC, 31 Oct (Brian Bockhahn) was a great find, especially for a site outside the coastal plain.

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** Sightings of this sparrow, which is rare in our region, were of one at Carver's Gap on Roan Mountain, NC, 23 Sept (Rick Knight); three in the Camp Creek marshy area in Burke Co, NC, 4 Oct (Ricky Davis); one along the BRP near Moses Cone Park, NC, 4 Oct (Davis); one at North

River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, 25 Oct (John Fussell, et al.); one along Gaston Dam Rd in Halifax Co, NC, 17 Oct (Davis); and one on the W side of Lake Phelps, NC, 25 Nov (Brian Bockhahn, Matt Daw, et al.).

**Lapland Longspur:** Ricky Davis found the only longspurs this fall—one at the N end of Pea Island, NC, 7 Nov; and two amidst a large flock of Horned Larks in a field along Shields Rd in NE Halifax Co, NC, 15 Nov.

**Summer Tanager:** An individual found at Fort Raleigh in Manteo, NC, during a WOW field trip, 7–8 Nov (Jeff Lewis, et al.) was quite late.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Somewhat late were individuals seen at feeders in Manteo, NC, 2–5 Nov (Jeff Lewis); in Beaufort, SC, 8 Nov (Buddy Campbell); and in Winston-Salem, NC, 23 Nov (Jeremy Reiskind, *fide* Phil Dickinson). A great count of 86 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks was made at Carver's Gap on Roan Mountain, NC, 23 Sept (Rick Knight).

**Indigo Bunting:** An individual found at the N end of Pea Island, NC, 5 Nov (Ricky Davis) was somewhat late.

**Painted Bunting:** Lingering “green birds” were found in a yard in Southern Shores, NC, 1 Nov (*fide* Jeff Lewis) and at Alligator River NWR, NC, 4 Nov (Derb Carter, Ricky Davis). Both these sites are north of the species' typical range.

**Dickcissel:** At least ten birds continued from the summer at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, through August (John Fussell, et al.).

**Bobolink:** A huge flock of 3000 Bobolinks was seen at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, 6 Sept (Ross McGregor, et al.).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** An adult male photographed at a feeder in Morehead City, NC, 8 Sept (Jeff Mayo, *fide* John Fussell) was the state's only fall report.

**Brewer's Blackbird:** A flock of an unspecified number was found at the same location where this species was found last winter, in a cow pasture in Townville, SC, 25 Nov (Linda Kolb).

**Purple Finch:** Somewhat early were females/juveniles in Vulture, NC, 17 Oct (Ricky Davis); in Black Mountain, NC, 21 Oct (Stu Gibeau); in New Bern, NC, 21 Oct (Inge Parker); and in Winston-Salem, NC, 22 Oct (Phil Dickinson).

**Red Crossbill:** This species apparently bred on Bald Ridge Knob, near Mt Mitchell SP, NC, where pairs were observed throughout the period and a high count of 25–30, including adults and fledglings, was made 30 Aug (Marilyn Westphal, et al.).

# CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

[www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org)

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

Membership is open to all persons interested in the conservation, natural history, and study of wildlife with particular emphasis on birds. Dues, contributions, and bequests to the Club may be deductible from state and federal income and estate taxes. Make checks payable to Carolina Bird Club, Inc. Send checks or correspondence regarding membership or change of address to the Headquarters Secretary. Dues include \$6 for a subscription to the *CBC Newsletter* and \$7 for a subscription to *The Chat*. Associate members do not receive a separate subscription to publications.

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# The Chat

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# THE CHAT

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## 2009 Annual Report of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee

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**Donna Slyce<sup>1</sup>, Chair, Giff Beaton, Lex Glover, Chris Hill,  
J. B. Hines III, Will Post, Steve Wagner**

*<sup>1</sup> 304 Diamond Lane, Ridgeway, SC 29130*

In 2009, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee completed action on nine reports. Of these, seven were accepted and two were not accepted. Among the accepted reports were two that promoted a species from the Provisional I category to the Definitive category, and one that is a second record of a species in the state. A report of a Pacific Loon observed on Lake Russell in late April 2009 and photographed by Jeff Catlin, and a detailed report of a Long-tailed Jaeger found on Lake Hartwell in September 2005 and photographed extensively by Chuck Cape, moved these two species from the Provisional I category to the Definitive category of the state list. A report of a Broad-billed Hummingbird by Bill Hilton, documented by his usual excellent photographs and thorough write-up, is only a second record of the species in South Carolina.

Committee membership changed in 2009. Due to the possible conflict of interests in sitting on the South Carolina Bird Records Committee, which is a standing committee of the Carolina Bird Club, and his duties as the current President of the Carolina Bird Club, Taylor Piephoff stepped off the committee. He was replaced by J. B. Hines III of Chesnee. The number of the committee remains at seven.

The current state list stands at 454 species, including 16 Provisional II species and 14 Hypothetical species. The most recent revision of the state list can be found online at <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/brc>. The state list available online includes review categories in addition to list categories for each species.

Committee activity is reviewed below.

### Reports Accepted:

**Broad-billed Hummingbird (01-08-01):** A bird captured and banded in the community of Rockville on Wadmalaw Island in early January 2008 was extensively documented and photographed by Bill Hilton. His excellent report was accepted unanimously by the committee. This is only the second record of the species in the state.

**Long-tailed Jaeger (09-05-16):** A bird of this species was reported from Lake Hartwell on 4 September 2005 and observed by multiple observers at the time. The report included numerous excellent photographs of the bird taken by Chuck Cape as well as a detailed description of the bird by Earl W. Horn and, since the bird's location on Lake Hartwell meant he crossed the

state line between South Carolina and Georgia several times, a detailed map of the bird's location during the time of the reporters' observations compiled by Ken Blankenship. The report was accepted unanimously. Due to the inclusion of photographs, this record promotes the species to the Definitive category of the state list.

**Long-tailed Jaeger** (08-08-07): A specimen of this species was salvaged, photographed, and reported to the committee by Dr. Will Post in August 2008. The report was accepted by the committee. The specimen was prepared and is now archived in the Charleston Museum of Natural History.

**Black Guillemot** (01-08-04): A bird observed at Huntington Beach State Park in January 2008 by Jack Peachey was written up for the committee. The report was accepted.

**Ruff** (04-08-05): Gretchen Nareff submitted two photographs and a written report of a bird found on a private plantation in Beaufort County in April 2005. The report was accepted unanimously. This represents only the second April record of the species in South Carolina.

**White-winged Dove** (12-08-06): A report of a bird photographed at a feeder in December 2008 in the community of Okatie in Jasper County by Diane Rand was submitted to the committee. The report was accepted unanimously by the committee.

**Pacific Loon** (04-09-03): A digital photograph by Jeff Catlin of a bird observed at Lake Russell in April 2009 was submitted to the committee. The report was accepted unanimously by the committee. Due to the inclusion of the photograph, this record moves the species from the Provisional I category to the Definitive category of the state list.

### **Reports Sent For Outside Review:**

**Pacific Loon** (03-09-01): A well-written report of a bird observed at Pawleys Island in early March 2009 occasioned a split vote from the committee. The report will be sent for outside review.

### **Reports Not Accepted:**

**White-tailed Kite** (04-09-02): The committee received a written report of an individual of this species in early April 2009 in the community of Mayo in Spartanburg County. The report was not accepted by the committee due to a lack of convincing detail in the written description.

## General Field Notes

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*General Field Notes briefly report such items as rare sightings, unusual behaviors, significant nesting records, or summaries of such items.*

*First, second, or third sightings of species in either state must be submitted to the appropriate Bird Records Committee prior to publication in The Chat.*

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### **First Record of Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) for North Carolina**

**James C. Helms<sup>1</sup> and Harry E. LeGrand, Jr.<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>NC Division of Parks and Recreation, Lake Waccamaw State Park, 1866  
State Park Drive, Lake Waccamaw, NC 28450

<sup>2</sup>NC Natural Heritage Program, 1601 MSC, Raleigh, NC 27699-1601

On 10 April 2009, Keith Rogers, a local NC Wildlife Resources Commission enforcement officer, picked up a dead bird of prey in the Crusoe Island community in Columbus County, NC, near the dead end of Crusoe Island Road (SR 1930), adjacent to the Waccamaw River and 4.2 miles southwest of Lake Waccamaw. The bird had been found by a local resident, Greg Clewis, while he was mowing in a small, private cemetery located at 34°12' 25.21" N, 78° 33' 24.86" W. Clewis did not recognize the bird and noted that each leg was banded. He contacted Rogers, who picked up the carcass later in the day and, with the aid of a field guide, identified it as a Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*).

Rogers (pers. comm.) found the bird to be recently dead, but emaciated and in poor health. Because the Snail Kite is an endangered species, Rogers reported the find to Sandra Allred of the US Fish and Wildlife Service and turned the specimen over to her early the following week. John Hammond, also with the Service, sent several photographs of the specimen to LeGrand. The photos (Figs. 1 and 2) show the very strongly hooked black bill, the orange-red cere, and solid dark and unstreaked plumage, broken only by the white upper-tail/rump and white tail tip. After being processed by the Service, the specimen was released to the NC State Museum of Natural Sciences for preservation in the bird collection.

Ryan Bakelaar, MD, who is affiliated with the Museum, prepared the study skin (NCSM 23161) and conducted a necropsy. His report to Allred stated that the kite appeared to be an adult male, in very good plumage and without any trauma, but emaciated with a very protuberant keel. It weighed 265.6 grams at preparation. It had a US Fish and Wildlife Service band on its left leg (#936-24314) and another band on its right leg (letters M over X



repeated four times). The Bird Banding Lab website indicated that the kite was banded in Florida (no locality given) on 16 March 1997. An earlier report (Southern 2009) stated that “the bird is twelve years old.” Because the age of the bird at banding was not reported on the website, the kite was a minimum of twelve years old but could have been many years older if banded as an adult.

Although it has a wide neotropical distribution, in North America the Snail Kite is essentially restricted to the southern half of Florida. However, this remarkable North Carolina record comes less than two years after the occurrence of an adult male seen and photographed in Clarendon County, SC, from 14 May to mid-June 2007 (Slyce et al. 2009). An unconfirmed report from Georgia of one or two birds in 1973 (Sykes 1984) lacks sufficient details for provisional status on the Georgia state list (Beaton et al. 2003).

The photos of the North Carolina bird were accepted by the NC Bird Records Committee (LeGrand et al. 2010) in lieu of viewing of the study skin at the Museum. Acceptance of the photos and the specimen’s provenance (i.e., a lack of any questionable-origin votes) places the species directly onto the state’s Official List and establishes the northernmost record for this species.



Figure 1. Snail Kite found at Crusoe Island, Columbus County, on 10 April 2009. Photo by John Hammond and Sandra Allred/USFWS.



Figure 2. Closeup of Snail Kite specimen showing hooked bill. Photo by John Hammond and Sandra Allred/USFWS.

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## First Record of Buff-bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia yucatanensis*) for North Carolina

Harry E. LeGrand, Jr.<sup>1</sup> and Richard E. (Dick) Barmore<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>N.C. Natural Heritage Program, 1601 MSC, Raleigh, NC 27699-1601

<sup>2</sup>452 Indian Bluff Drive, Arapahoe, NC 28510

On 21 October 2007 Barmore observed an unusual hummingbird coming to the several feeders in his wooded yard near the Neuse River, west of the town of Arapahoe, Pamlico County. He and his wife Elizabeth White identified the bird as a Buff-bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia yucatanensis*), which had not previously been reported from North Carolina.

The bird was a large hummingbird, with a green head, buff belly and undertail coverts, a narrow white belly band at the legs, a rufous tail, and a reddish bill with a dark tip. The bird's sex could not be determined because adults of this species are not sexually dimorphic. Barmore heard the bird give a dry buzzy chip during its stay. It was seen through windows from inside their home at distances of 3–40 feet, and Barmore was able to obtain several photographs (Fig. 1). He and White watched the bird for a total of about 14.5 hours over its brief stay. Seventeen other birders, including LeGrand, John Fussell, Bob Holmes, and Derb Carter, saw the Buff-bellied Hummingbird on 22 and 23 October. The last sighting was around 0800 on the morning of 23 October.

The Buff-bellied Hummingbird is quite similar to the Berylline Hummingbird (*A. beryllina*), a primarily Mexican species that ranges north sparingly to southeastern Arizona and western Texas (Howell and Webb 1995) but never to the eastern half of the United States. This species has a grayish belly, brighter rufous wings, and a darker reddish-black bill without a well-defined black tip. Although the Buff-bellied is also found mostly in Mexico, it is a permanent resident in southern Texas and is regularly found along the Gulf Coast east to Florida in winter (American Ornithologists' Union 1998). It is the only hummingbird to exhibit such northward winter dispersal (Chavez-Ramirez and Moreno-Valdez 1999). Records away from the Gulf Coast are from Arkansas, Alabama (American Ornithologists' Union 1998), South Carolina (Slyce et al. 2004), and Georgia (Georgia Ornithological Society Records Committee 2009). The states of Virginia (Rottenborn and Brinkley 2007) and Tennessee (Tennessee Ornithological Society Bird Records Committee 2007) have no records.

This report of Buff-bellied Hummingbird in Pamlico County was accepted by the NC Bird Records Committee (LeGrand et al. 2008). Because the photographs clearly depicted this species, it was added directly to the state's Official List.



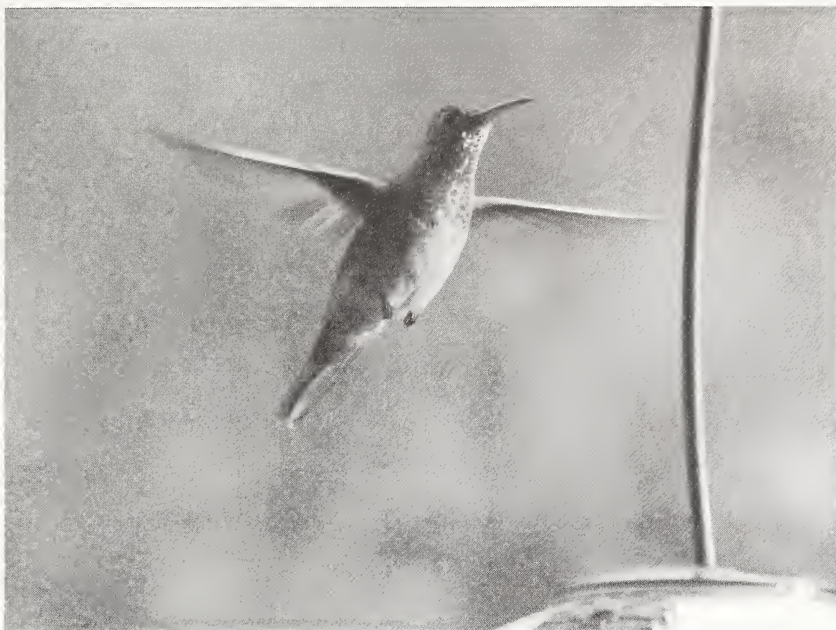


Figure 1. Buff-bellied Hummingbird found in Arapahoe, Pamlico County, NC on 21 October 2007. Photo by Dick Barmore.

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# First Specimen of Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) for South Carolina

Christopher E. Hill,<sup>1</sup> Tom Marshall,<sup>2</sup> Wendy B. Allen<sup>3</sup>

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## Introduction

Arctic Tern, considered hypothetical in South Carolina by Post and Gauthreaux (1989), was placed on the provisional list of South Carolina birds in 2004 based on a written description by Steve Patterson (Worthington et al. 2004), and moved to the definitive list based on video taken by Jack Peachey in 2004 of a bird off Murrells Inlet (Slyce et al. 2005). Here we report on the third documented record and the first specimen for South Carolina, salvaged in May 2009.

## Results

On 22 May 2009, in the course of a survey for nesting sea turtles, the second author (Marshall) found, brought home, and photographed a dead medium-sized tern from Debidue Beach, Georgetown Co., SC. The tern looked fresh and had not been there the day before. After photographing the bird, Marshall discarded the carcass. However, upon consulting field guides, he tentatively identified the bird as an Arctic Tern and contacted the third author (Allen), who suggested he retrieve the bird and freeze it, which he did. Marshall later transferred the tern to Allen, who alerted the first author (Hill) and offered him the tern, at this point tentatively identified as a Common/Arctic type, for the teaching collection at Coastal Carolina University. Allen eventually transferred the tern to Hill, who was able to confirm that the bird was an Arctic Tern. Hill then transferred the tern to the Charleston Museum, where it was preserved as a standard skin with detached left wing, Charleston Museum #2010.018. The bird was a male, with no molt. Its flat wing measured 26.4 cm and its wingspan 74.5 cm. Even allowing for slight loss of mass while frozen, the bird was emaciated, with no detectable fat and a mass of 80 g (cf. range of masses of 78 breeding males in New Brunswick 97–124 g, average  $111 \pm 6.6$  g; Hatch 2002).

Photographs taken at the time of recovery showed a short, blood-red bill, long outer rectrices with gray on the outer webs, and gray underparts, all characteristic of Arctic Terns. Distinction from the much more common Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) was confirmed by measurement of the short legs. Tarsi shorter than 17.0 mm conclusively separate Arctic from Common Terns (Hatch 2002); the right tarsus on this bird measured 14.0 mm.



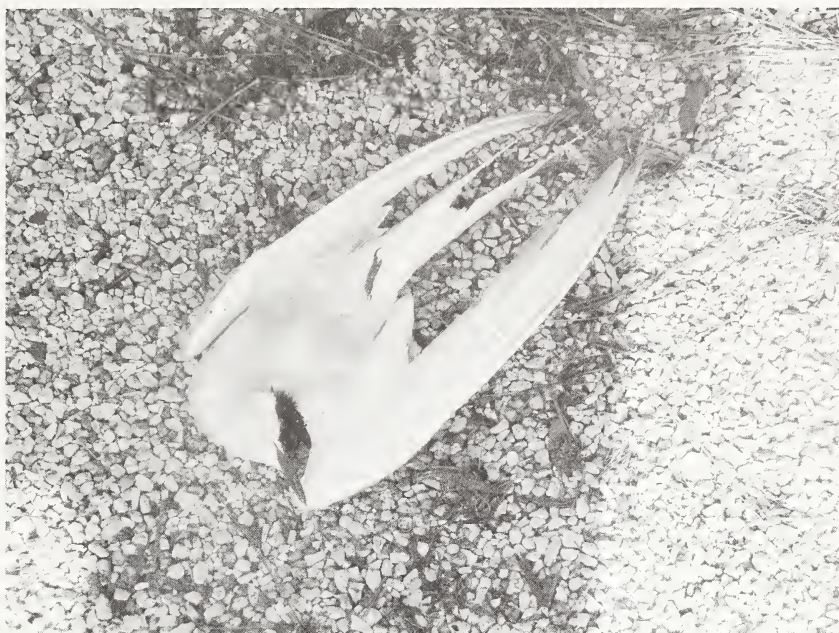


Figure 1. Two photographs of the Arctic Tern after it was salvaged from Debidue Beach, SC. Photos by T. Marshall.



## Discussion

Arctic Terns breed no closer to the recovery site than Massachusetts (1200 km northeast). During both spring and fall migrations birds seen from the coast at the latitude of the Carolinas may be largely windblown, stray or sick birds (Hatch 2002).

At Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, which extends well to the east, observations from offshore boats and occasionally from shore have established that Arctic Terns are rare but regular in spring migration, mostly in the last third of May. Seasonal totals range from single digits in some years to mid-double digits for other springs (Brinkley 1994; Davis 2003, 2004, 2005a, b, 2007; Southern 2009), with the variation likely due to weather patterns. Even in the ocean off Cape Hatteras, the species is much rarer (if present at all) in fall migration, when birds from the Americas likely migrate through the eastern Atlantic Ocean (Hatch 2002). Fall sight records are also clouded by formidable identification issues.

To the south of South Carolina, in Georgia and Florida, Arctic Tern is considered an accidental or casual spring migrant offshore, but with many more records than for South Carolina (Stevenson and Anderson 1994; Beaton et al. 2003). There are specimen records from both states, and the species is accidental on shore in Georgia, with several sight records from the coast and one specimen record from inland (Beaton et al. 2003).

The date of recovery of the present specimen is consistent with patterns established in surrounding states.

On the same date that this bird was recovered, observers in South Carolina and southern North Carolina observed dozens of Leach's (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) and Wilson's Storm-Petrels (*Oceanites oceanicus*) from shore, including many inside inlets and several dead individuals at the surf line (CEH, unpublished obs.; Ritch Lilly and John Fussell, pers. comm.). The appearance of the tern thus probably coincides with a rare occurrence of either weather or food patterns that pushed pelagic birds into shore along the SC bight. Indeed, weather buoy station 41004, approximately 95 km south of the beach where the tern was recovered, recorded seven days of Easterly winds in late May 2009. Sustained strong (15m/s) winds from the northeast began in the early hours of May 18, shifting to due east at 10–11 m/s by 21 May, and continuing from the southeast at 7 m/s through 24 May, finally dropping to speeds < 5 m/s on 25 May. (Data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Data Buoy Center, <http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/>, accessed 5 Jan 2010; 1m/sec=2.2 mph).

Arctic Terns have been reported more frequently in recent years from South Carolina waters, including the video by Peachey mentioned above and sight reports by Nathan Dias et al.; (Davis 2004, 2005a), but as field identification of medium-sized terns at sea remains challenging, further documentation of reports is desirable for the state to better establish patterns of occurrence.

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## **Broad-billed Hummingbird (*Cynanthus latirostris*): First South Carolina Banding and Photographic Record**

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On 4 January 2008 Donald Proctor spotted a hummingbird with a blue throat at his home near Rockville, SC on Wadlamaw Island, about 25 miles southwest of Charleston. Donald's wife Annabeth confirmed the sighting later that day and described the bird's vocalizations as "like a Ruby-throated Hummingbird with a frog in its throat."

The Proctors quickly contacted me via e-mail, so early on the morning of 6 January I drove to their Low Country residence and erected a radio-controlled portable wire trap in which I hung a sugar water feeder. At 7:05 a.m. in pre-dawn light I observed what was obviously a very dark hummingbird swoop past the trap. The bird made several more passes-by before entering the device and being captured at 7:21 a.m.

Even in dim light the bird's fully iridescent body glistened blue and green, and its red and black bill almost glowed (Fig. 1)—sure signs this was a male Broad-billed Hummingbird, *Cynanthus latirostris*. (Females are drab and except for a reddish lower mandible resemble female Ruby-throats.) The only species with which my in-hand bird might be confused is its congener, the adult male White-eared Hummingbird, *C. leucotis* (Johnsgard 1997). The latter has a similarly colored body and bill but typically sports a prominent diagonal white stripe behind its eye; in addition, the White-eared male's head is purplish. Both species have bright white undertail coverts; in a White-eared the white usually extends as a central line up the abdomen. The species further differ in their rectrices. When the Proctor's Broad-billed first approached the feeder, even in silhouette I could see his tail was heavily forked; the tail in White-eareds is square. In the hand, the top of the Broad-billed's tail was dull green while the undersides of the rectrices were metallic gun metal blue. The tail's ventral surface—which would show when a courting male is facing a female—is more colorful than the dorsal side.

After removing the Proctors' bird from the trap I placed his bill into the port on a sugar water feeder. The hummer drank readily and I fed him several times during the banding, measuring, and photographic process. I applied band #Y14597 to the Broad-billed Hummingbird's left leg and released him unharmed.

South Carolina's only other known Broad-billed occurred on 30 July 1985, as observed and reported by David and Julia Wise in the extreme northwest mountain province of the state. LeGrand (1986) summarized the



sighting in *American Birds* thus: “Although it could not be documented by photograph or by expert birders, an adult male Broad-billed Hummingbird at a Seneca, SC feeder 30 July 1985 was impeccably described and compared with noticeably smaller Ruby-throateds to rule out all other species . . . a first for the Southern Atlantic Coast Region if not for the entire Atlantic Coast.”



Figure 1. Broad-billed Hummingbird. Photo by Bill Hilton Jr.

Broad-billed Hummingbirds are indeed rare in the U.S.—especially as far east as the Carolinas. North Carolina’s first one appeared near New Bern on 7 Oct 2001 (LeGrand 2007), with another at Kill Devil Hills (Dare County) in mid-summer 2005 (*ibid*). The species breeds in extreme southeastern Arizona and throughout northern and central Mexico. The Arizona population migrates south, but it is believed Mexican Broad-billeds are primarily year-round residents not expected to show up at northerly locations. Nonetheless, there are now Broad-billed Hummingbird records for at least 19 states as far away as Oregon and Idaho or Michigan and Wisconsin (*fide* state birding checklists). There are even reports of Broad-billeds from Ontario and New Brunswick—a significant distance for a “non-migratory” hummingbird. What causes these birds to stray from “traditional” breeding and wintering grounds is anyone’s guess.

Based on careful examination, I suspected the Wadmalaw Broad-billed was a second-year male hatched sometime in 2007—especially because of

the extent of black on his bill, brown edging on much of the body plumage, and the pale gray tips on central tail feathers. However, because of my unfamiliarity with handling mid-winter Broad-billeds I took a more conservative approach and simply aged him as “after-hatch-year.”

Annabeth Proctor later informed me that “About three hours following his banding and release, the little Broad-billed Hummingbird re-established his territory and returned to normal behavior. It is amazing how quickly the other hummingbirds tried to take over his feeders.” The Proctors welcomed Carolinas birders to visit and observe their Broad-billed Hummingbird throughout the month until he disappeared, apparently sometime in late January or early February 2008.

Measurements and other attributes of Broad-billed Hummingbird #Y14597 included: date of capture: 06 Jan 2008; age/sex: After hatch year male (probable second year); weight: 3.37g; wing chord: 50.99mm; tail length: 35.0mm; tail fork: 9.0mm; culmen (upper bill ridge): 21.0mm; bill corrugations: none; molt: none noticeable.

An unexpected follow-up on the Proctor’s bird came in early August 2008 when a Broad-billed Hummingbird first appeared at a feeder at the New Bern home of Patti Holland in coastal North Carolina (Craven County), on the Neuse River about 300 miles directly northeast of Rockville, SC. This bird was recaptured on 9 November by Susan Campbell (LeGrand et al. 2009) and confirmed to be the individual I banded at the Proctors’ ten months previously. This was the third state record for the species in North Carolina and the second for the New Bern area. The bird was present at least until early February 2009 (Southern 2009). Color photographs taken by others at New Bern show a hummingbird with much brighter plumage—further evidence he was a second-year immature when banded at Rockville. One can only speculate whether this Broad-billed Hummingbird spent summer months in the Carolinas or whether he returned to his typical breeding grounds in Mexico and then made another trip to the Southeast.



Figure 2. Broad-billed Hummingbird. Photo by Bill Hilton Jr.

### **Acknowledgements**

I thank Annabeth Proctor for her initiative in reporting to me the Broad-billed Hummingbird, and I further appreciate her and her husband graciously hosting me as I banded and confirmed the bird’s identification. Thanks also

to fellow hummingbird bander Susan Campbell for letting me know about her recapture of the Rockville bird in New Bern. My hummingbird banding in the U.S. is supported in part by donations from individual members of the Carolina Bird Club.

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## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Winter 2009–2010, unless otherwise noted)

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*Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.*

Winter	December 1–February 28	due March 20
Spring	March 1–May 31	due June 20
Summer	June 1–July 31	due August 20
Fall	August 1–November 30	due December 20

*Reports can be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you type them and list the sightings according to the birds in checklist order (not according to dates or locations). If you submit your report to me through e-mail, please type your report directly into the message or copy it from a word processing program directly into the message. You may also attach your file to the e-mail, but if you do, please let me know the program used and also send a second version saved as a text (.txt) file.*

*Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.*

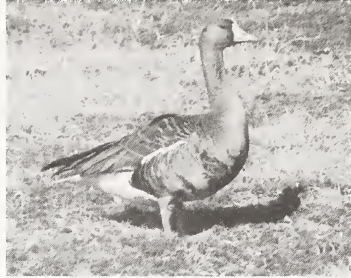
*Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.*

*I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.*

*If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.*

**Fulvous Whistling-Duck:** One was found at the Santee Coastal Reserve in Charleston County (Co), SC, 19 Dec (Bruce Peterjohn, Dick Rosche), but was not relocated during the McClellanville Christmas Bird Count (CBC) the following day. This sighting provided the first report of this species in the Carolinas in several years.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** There were more reports of this species than usual this winter, though no large flocks were found. Four were seen on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* National Audubon Society (NAS)) and provided the most southern report. Two were seen flying NE along the coast at the N end of Masonboro Inlet, during the Wilmington, NC CBC, 2 Jan (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, John Voigt, *fide* Sam Cooper). Two were seen flying over the fields in the Lake Landing area of



Greater White-fronted Goose, 13 Feb 2010, Winston-Salem, NC. Photo by Phil Dickinson.

Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), NC, 12 Jan (Derb Carter). Individuals were also found on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (Ricky Davis); amongst Canada Geese on Lake Julian in Skyland, NC, 16 Jan (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey); at Annie McCrary Park in Wilmington, NC, 31 Jan (Bryan McLean); and at the Archie Elledge Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in Winston-Salem, NC, 13 Feb (Phil Dickinson, Bill Gifford).

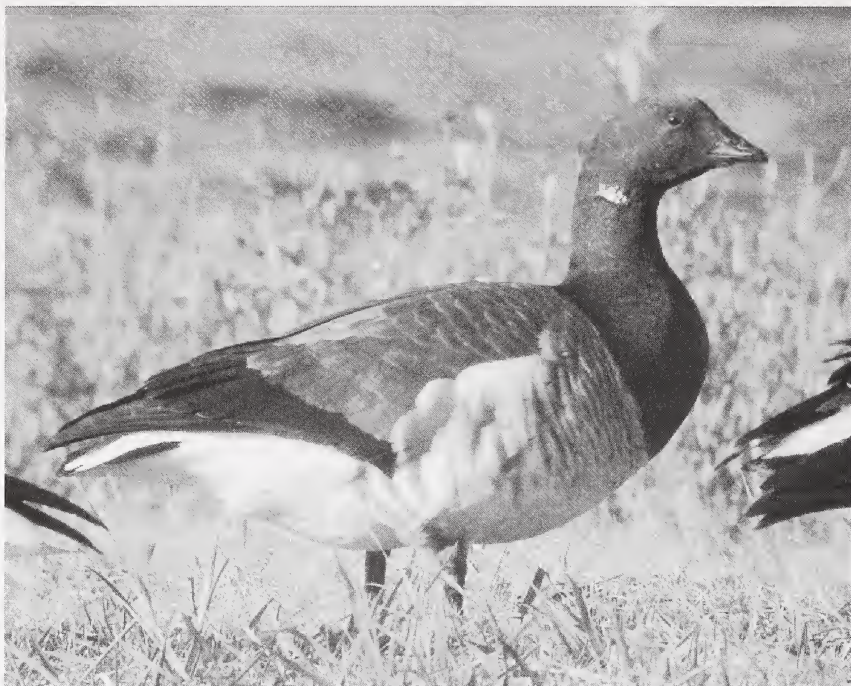
**Snow Goose:** Outside of the species' typical northeastern North Carolina wintering ground were five in a flooded field along NC-191 in Henderson Co, NC, 12 Dec (Wayne Forsythe); 600 on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); three on the Santee NWR, SC CBC, 26 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe); a large flock of 160 in flight over Ft Fisher, NC, 3 Jan (Ricky Davis); two at Annie McCrary Park in Wilmington, NC, 31 Jan (Bryan McLean); and about 40 in flight over Pee Dee NWR, NC, 20 Feb (Ron Clark).

**Ross's Goose:** The winter's reports of this rare goose were one with five Snow Geese in a flooded field along NC-191 in Henderson Co, NC, 12 Dec (Wayne Forsythe); one on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (Ricky Davis); at least five inside a huge flock of Snow Geese at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, NC, 12–14 Jan (Davis, Derb Carter); two with Canada Geese in a suburban area of S Myrtle Beach, SC, 20–22 Jan (Ritch Lilly); and one in Charleston, SC, 30 Jan (Cherrie Sneed, Chris Snook).

**Brant:** Sightings continued to increase at Oregon Inlet, NC, with 15 counted on the lawn of the fishing center, 17 Dec (John Haire) and a high count of 46 made at the same location, 2 Jan (Jeff Lewis). Also locally unusual were 30 on the Kitty Hawk, NC CBC, 19 Dec (*fide* Lewis); 11 on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); and four in flight over Ft Fisher, NC, 3 Jan (Ricky Davis). The winter's high count of this species was 253 on the Cape Hatteras, NC CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Pat Moore).

**Cackling Goose:** The winter's reports of this rare goose were of three on the Pettigrew SP, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Doug LeQuire); three on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (Jeff Lewis, Ricky Davis); two at the same location 16 Jan (Ed Corey, Harry LeGrand, Matt Daw, et al.); one, a first for the count, on the Alligator River NWR, NC CBC, 30 Dec (Bob

Lewis, *fide* Jeff Lewis); and two inside a huge flock of Snow Geese at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lake NWR, NC, 12–14 Jan (Davis, Derb Carter).



Brant, 17 Dec 2009, Oregon Inlet Fishing Center, NC. Photo by John Haire.

**Mute Swan:** Thought to be of wild origin were two at Pea Island NWR, NC, 10 Dec (Brian Bockhahn, Matt Daw, Ali Iyoob); and one seen flying S, high over the ocean, about half a mile off Ft Fisher, NC, 3 Jan (Ricky Davis).

**Tundra Swan:** South of the species' typical wintering range were nine on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); 196 on the ACE Basin, SC CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* NAS); two on the Pee Dee NWR, NC CBC, 2 Jan (*fide* Don Fink); and 85 at Bear Island WMA, SC, 14 Feb (Carroll Richard, Kathleen O'Grady). A large flock of 1225 in NE Edgecombe Co, NC, 15 Feb (Ricky Davis) was considered locally unusual.

**Eurasian Wigeon:** The two most reliable sites in the Carolinas for this rare-but-regular Eurasian stray, Pea Island and Lake Mattamuskeet, each hosted up to four birds this winter. Four were counted on the Bodie-Pea Island, NC CBC, 28 Dec (*fide* Paul Sykes), with two to three present throughout the period (Jeff Lewis). Four were also counted on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan), three of which were found in the Lake Landing area (Ricky Davis). Individuals were also seen on Lilliput Pond in New Bern, NC, throughout the winter (Bob Holmes, Al Gamache); on the Winyah Bay, SC CBC, for a second year in a row, 17 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover); and at a pond in Morehead City, NC, 13–20 Jan (Ed Dombrowski, John Fussell, et al.).



**Mottled Duck:** For a third winter in a row, a pair was seen on Lake Medcalf in Sunset Beach, NC, throughout the winter (Mary McDavit, et al.). An individual found on a small lake in Boiling Springs, NC, 23 Jan (Greg Massey, Harry Sell) was a first for that immediate area.

**Redhead:** Unusually far inland were about 40 on Lake Julian in Skyland, NC, 12 Dec (Wayne Forsythe); a pair in Davidson, NC, in mid-December (Dave Lovett); and 35 in the Farrington area of Jordan Lake, NC, 4 Dec (Ricky Davis).

**King Eider:** One was seen this winter—a female in flight with two female Common Eiders, off Ft Macon, Atlantic Beach, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 20 Dec (Ricky Davis).



Common Eider, 8 Dec 2009, Cape Point, Buxton, NC. Photo by Audrey Whitlock.

**Common Eider:** A massive irruption of this species took place along the Atlantic coast this winter, with multiple birds reported at multiple sites in our region. The best counts were nine (!), including two adult males, in Winyah Bay, SC, during the CBC, 17 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover); seven, five females and two juvenile males, around the jetties in Murrells Inlet, SC, 21 Feb (Steve Compton); four, three juvenile males and a female, near the coquina rock outcrop at Fort Fisher, NC, 20 Dec (John Ennis), with two continuing until at least 28 Jan (Ricky Davis); three females around the jetty at Fort Macon SP in Atlantic Beach, NC, 24 Dec (John Fussell), with at least one continuing into February (Randy Newman, *fide* Fussell); three, an adult male and two females, around a jetty in Folly Beach, SC, 1 Jan (Rob Lane); and up to three, two juvenile males and a female, around Oregon Inlet, NC, throughout the period (Jeff Lewis, Harry LeGrand, several observers (sev. obs.)). Adult males were photographed off Cape Point in Buxton, NC, 8 Dec (Audrey Whitlock) and at a pier in Garden City, SC, 8 Dec–28 Jan (Jack Peachey, Gary Phillips, et al.). Individual females were noted in Wrightsville Beach, 2

Jan (*fide* Sam Cooper); in Edisto Beach, SC, 7–9 Jan (Buddy Campbell, Cherrie Sneed); off Indian Beach, NC, 31 Jan (Davis); and at a pier in Ocean Isle, NC, 13 Feb (Tom & Tammy Sanders).

**Harlequin Duck:** A juvenile/non-breeding male was photographed on the rocks next to the Bonner Bridge at Oregon Inlet, NC, 6 Dec (Jeff Lewis) and was relocated at the end of the rock groin, 10 Dec (Ben Watkins, *fide* Lewis). Two and a half weeks later, a bird entering adult male breeding plumage was photographed on the rocks next to the Bonner Bridge, 27–29 Dec (Lewis, Jeff Beane et al.). One could wonder if these sightings were of two different individuals, or, rather, the same bird in different stages of plumage.



Harlequin Duck, 28 Dec 2009, Oregon Inlet, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

**Surf Scoter:** Nine seen on the Neuse River, in New Bern, NC, during the CBC, 14 Dec (Rich & Susan Boyd) were unusual for a site so far from the coast.

**Black Scoter:** One found on Lake Tillery, NC, 6 Dec (Ron Clark) was the farthest inland scoter reported this winter.

**Long-tailed Duck:** Away from the Pamlico Sound, where this species is locally common, sightings included one on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); two at N Folly Beach, SC, 1–9 Jan (Chris Snook, Andy Harrison); one at a fishing pier in Nags Head, NC, 14 Jan (Brian Bockhahn); up to two at Murrells Inlet, SC, 15–23 Jan (Ritch Lilly,

Stephen Thomas); one off Indian Beach, NC, 31 Jan (Ricky Davis); and “several” in flight off Pea Island, NC, 19 Feb (John Haire, Royce Hough).

**Common Goldeneye:** Some of the farther inland sightings were of two at the WTP along NC-191 in Henderson Co, NC, 30 Dec (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey); three at the same location, 27 Jan (Forsythe); and two females on Salem Lake in Winston-Salem, NC, 10 Feb (John Haire).

**Common Merganser:** Sightings included 25 on several ponds off US-64, just W of Creswell, NC, 27 Dec (Ricky Davis, Derb Carter); a pair at Riverbend Park in Conover, NC, 9 Jan (Monroe Pannell, Dwayne Martin); a female, well-studied, in a pond along NC-179 in Sunset Beach, NC, 9 Feb (Kevin Markham); two at Bear Island WMA, SC, 14 Feb (Carroll Richard, Kathleen O’Grady); and a female on Salem Lake in Winston-Salem, NC, 23 Feb (John Haire). Lake Phelps, NC, again hosted the best numbers in our region, with 180 tallied on the Pettigrew SP CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Doug LeQuire).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Inland sightings included one on the Southern Lake Norman, NC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* Taylor Piephoff); one on the Southern Pines, NC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* Susan Campbell); and nine on Jordan Lake, NC, 24 Dec (Phil Warren).

**Pacific Loon:** The winter’s reports of this rare visitor were of one on the New Bern, NC CBC, 14 Dec (*fide* Bob Holmes); at least three off Wrightsville Beach, NC, during the Wilmington CBC, 3 Jan (Derb Carter, *fide* Sam Cooper); and one near the coquina rock outcrop at Ft Fisher, NC, 9 Jan (Cooper) through 3 Feb (Mary McDavit).

**Horned Grebe:** Notable inland counts were 287 on Kerr Lake, NC, during the CBC, 5 Jan (*fide* Brian Bockhahn); 103 in the cove on the W side of Seaforth Recreation Area at Jordan Lake, NC, 23 Jan (Kevin Markham); and 80+ on the S end of Lake Norman, NC, 14 Feb (David Wright).

**Red-necked Grebe:** Four were reported this winter—three seen in flight over the ocean and one that lingered on an inland lake for at least a month. The ocean flybys were an individual, flying S, off Kitty Hawk, NC, during the CBC, 19 Dec (Ricky Davis); and two, flying E, off the Sheraton Hotel Pier in Atlantic Beach, NC, 30 Jan (Davis, Ali Iyoob, Harry LeGrand). The inland bird was found on the S end of Lake Norman in Mecklenburg Co, NC, 14 Jan (Kevin Metcalf) and was seen by many through 14 Feb (David Wright).

**Eared Grebe:** Individuals were seen on Lake Medcalf in Sunset Beach, NC, 11–12 Dec (Mary McDavit); on the S end of Lake Norman, NC, 12–14 Feb (Kevin Metcalf, David Wright); on the ocean off Kill Devil Hills, NC, 15 Feb (Scott Baron); and near the NC-50 boat launch on Falls Lake, NC, 28 Feb (Ali Iyoob). The winter’s high count was 11 at the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, 2 Feb (Steve Calver).

**Western Grebe:** A pair of *Aechmophorus* grebes, originally identified as Western Grebes, were found on Lake Brandt in Greensboro, NC, 6 Dec (Henry & Elizabeth Link, George Wheaton). Many birders observed the birds until they were last reported on the E side of nearby Lake Townsend,



22 Dec (Link). Some birders speculated that one of the two birds was actually a Clark's Grebe, or possibly a hybrid of the two species, though a written report of a Clark's Grebe has not yet been received by the NC Bird Records Committee (BRC). Another Western Grebe was found on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC CBC, 3 Jan (*vide* Melinda Jones).

**Northern Fulmar:** Only one was reported this winter—an individual seen during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 14 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). Usually late winter pelagic trips find multiple fulmars . . . where have all the fulmars gone?

**Greater Shearwater:** A bird very rarely seen in winter, a Greater Shearwater was seen on a chartered pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 5 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Sooty Shearwater:** Another bird very rarely seen in winter, one Sooty Shearwater was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 20 Feb (Brian Patteson, Jeff Pippen, et al.).

**Manx Shearwater:** Three were seen during the Cape Hatteras, NC CBC, 27 Dec—one off Cape Point (Ricky Davis) and two off Hatteras Inlet, NC (Brian Patteson). On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, two were seen 5 Feb, and one was seen 14 Feb (Patteson).

**Northern Gannet:** Notable for their relatively inland locality were sightings of four in the Bogue Sound, off Morehead City, NC, during severe low pressure, 19 Dec (John Fussell) and 50 over Middens Creek, a bay off the Core Sound, in Smyrna, NC, during tranquil weather, 31 Dec (Mark Hooper, *vide* Fussell).

**American White Pelican:** Some of the better counts of this increasingly reported species were 54 at the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, 3 Dec (Steve Calver); 174 on the Winyah Bay, SC CBC, 17 Dec (*vide* Lex Glover); 82 on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*vide* NAS); 201 on the ACE Basin, SC CBC, 27 Dec (*vide* NAS); 57 on the Pea Island NWR, NC CBC, 28 Dec (*vide* Jeff Lewis); 30 in Atlantic, NC, 28 Dec (Barbara & Ginny Pigott, *vide* John Fussell); 33 on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*vide* Allen Bryan); 23 in the Spring Creek Impoundment Ponds near Aurora, NC, 4 Feb (Al Gamache, et al.); 12 over the Newport River near Morehead City, NC, 18 Jan (Rosemary & Tony D'Andrea, *vide* Fussell); 144 at Bear Island WMA, SC, 14 Feb (Carroll Richard, Kathleen O'Grady); and 23 at North Inlet, N of Georgetown, SC, 15 Feb (Chris Hill).

**Great Cormorant:** Sightings included one on the Winyah Bay, SC CBC, 17 Dec (*vide* Lex Glover); two on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*vide* NAS); 11 on the Wilmington, NC CBC, 2 Jan (*vide* Sam Cooper); three at Oregon Inlet, NC, 9 Jan (Jeff Lewis); two at the Cedar Island, NC, ferry terminal, 30–31 Jan (sev. obs.); and four on a channel marker between the Cedar Island and Ocracoke, NC, ferry terminals, during the winter (John Fussell).

**Anhinga:** Locally unusual for the winter season were two Anhingas at Greenfield Lake in Wilmington, NC, until at least 27 Dec (Daniel Hueholt); and one in W New Bern, NC, throughout the period (Al Gamache).

**Least Bittern:** Rare winter sightings were made at the Spring Creek Impoundment Ponds, near Aurora, NC, where an individual was photographed, 6 Jan (Al Gamache, Dick Barmore, Audrey Williams); and at Savannah NWR, SC, where three were well-seen, 9 Jan (Matt Malin, J. D. Wilson).

**Reddish Egret** (dark-morph unless otherwise stated): The individual seen at the Rachel Carson Reserve in Beaufort, NC, during the fall, continued until at least 20 Dec (Sam Cooper, JoAnne Powell, *vide* John Fussell). Two birds found at Cape Lookout, NC, 21 Feb (Fussell, et al.) very possibly overwintered at that location. In South Carolina, one was found during the Winyah Bay CBC, 17 Dec (*vide* Lex Glover)

**Cattle Egret:** Some of the higher CBC counts of this species, which can be uncommon-to-rare in winter, were three on the Hilton Head Island, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*vide* Barry Lowes); 11 on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (Ricky Davis); and seven on the Pinewood, SC CBC, 31 Dec (*vide* Lex Glover). Also noteworthy was one seen at Pea Island NWR, NC, 6 Dec (Jeff Lewis); one photographed at a hog feed lot in Wilmington, NC, 2 Jan (John Ennis, *vide* Sam Cooper); and two at Savannah NWR, SC, 3 Jan (Carroll Richard, Kathleen O'Grady).

**Green Heron:** Ten found on the Hilton Head Island, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*vide* Barry Lowes) provided the winter's high count of this species. Farther north, rare wintering individuals were found during CBCs at Cape Hatteras, NC, 27 Dec (*vide* Pat Moore); and in Wilmington, NC, 2 Jan (Cary Paynter, *vide* Sam Cooper). Also reported were individuals in Jasper Co, SC, 2 Jan (Carroll Richard, Kathleen O'Grady); and at Savannah NWR, SC, 9 & 24 Jan (J. D. Wilson, Matt Malin).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** One found on the Clemson, SC, CBC, 19 Dec (*vide* Drew Lanham) was unusual for that inland location in winter. At a more usual coastal location, a good count of 21 was made at a roost in Beaufort, NC, 27 Jan (Rich & Susan Boyd).

**Glossy Ibis:** Some of the better counts of this species, which is less common in winter, were 268 on the ACE Basin, SC CBC, 27 Dec (*vide* NAS); 120 on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*vide* Allen Bryan); and 172 at Bear Island WMA, SC, 20 Feb (Lois Stacey, Anne Waters, Ruth Mead). Locally unusual for winter were individuals in Morehead City, NC, 30 Dec (Daniel Hueholt) and at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, 24 Jan (John Fussell, et al.).

**Wood Stork:** Unusual winter sightings included seven in the Hobucken Marshes of Pamlico Co, NC, during the CBC, 15 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); one on Bald Head Island, NC, 17 Jan (Juanita Roushdy); and one at a neighborhood pond in Wilmington, NC, 10 Feb (Amy Williamson).

**Black Vulture:** One, well-seen, flying low over Ocracoke, NC, 14 Jan (John Fussell) was possibly the first record of that species on that island.

**Osprey:** Inland sightings of this species are rare in winter, and thus of note were individuals found on CBCs at Southern Lake Norman, NC, 20 Dec (*vide* Taylor Piephoff); at Pee Dee NWR, NC, 2 Jan (Ron Clark, Tom

Sanders, et al.); in Alamance Co, NC, 2 Jan (*fide* Harry Shoffner); and on Jordan Lake, NC, 3 Jan (Kyle Mills, Mickey Mills, Richard Brown). Two at Thagard Lake in Whispering Pines, NC, throughout the winter, were also quite unusual (Susan Campbell).

**Northern Goshawk:** A perched adult was seen at close range at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, NC, 4 Feb (Rich & Susan Boyd). Remarkably, this was the observers' third sighting of this species around Pungo in the past eight years.

**Broad-winged Hawk:** Almost unheard-of in the Carolinas in winter, an adult Broad-winged Hawk was seen in Alleghany Co, NC, about a mile S of the Virginia border, during the New River CBC, 30 Dec (Ron Morris, Bill Gifford, Kim Brand, Jeremy Reiskind) and during the nearby Mount Jefferson, NC, CBC, 3 Jan (Phil Dickinson). Considering the rarity of this species in winter, and the proximity of these two CBC circles, it's highly probable that both sightings were of the same individual.

**"Kriders" Red-tailed Hawk:** An adult was seen at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, 29 Jan through the end of period (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, Mike Tove), and may very well be the same bird seen at this site last winter.

**Rough-legged Hawk:** Only one was reported this winter—an individual at Alligator River NWR, NC, 4 Feb (Rich & Susan Boyd).

**Golden Eagle:** Three were found on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (Ricky Davis, John Wright), providing a record number for that count. Two were seen at Bear Island WMA, SC, 14 Feb (Carroll Richard, Kathleen O'Grady). Individual adults were seen on Edisto Island, SC, 11 Dec (David Abbott); in Shelton Laurel, NC, 16 Jan (*fide* Charlotte Goedsche); and over fields along Canal B Rd, near the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, NC, 4 Feb (Rich & Susan Boyd).

**Merlin:** Notable outside the coastal plain, Merlins were found at several inland locations, including the Hillandale Golf Course in Durham, NC, for the second winter in a row, 8 Dec (Dan Kaplan) through at least 2 Jan (Steve Shultz); in Winston-Salem, NC, 19 Dec (John Haire) and 28 Jan (Phil Crisp, *fide* Haire); and at Jordan Lake, NC, during the CBC, 3 Jan (Tom Driscoll, Steve Foster, Bo Howes) and again 10 Jan (Phil Warren).

**Peregrine Falcon:** An adult found along Hooper Lane in Henderson Co, NC, 12 Dec (Wayne Forsythe) was unusual for the mountain region in winter. An adult returned to downtown Charlotte, NC, for a fourth consecutive winter, where it was seen throughout the period (Anne Clark, *fide* Ron Clark).

**Black Rail:** Individuals were briefly seen at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, during the Morehead City, NC CBC, 20 Dec (Rich Boyd, Wade Fuller); in Wanchese, NC, 28 Dec (Ricky Davis); at Savannah NWR, SC, 31 Jan (Scott Restivo); and along the causeway at Cedar Island, NC, 3 Feb (Rich & Susan Boyd).

**Common Moorhen:** One seen on the Bodie Island, NC, Lighthouse Pond, 18 Jan, was a good find for the midwinter season (Harry LeGrand).



**Sandhill Crane:** CBCs found one in McClellanville, SC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); five at Santee NWR, SC, 26 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe); and one at Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC, 3 Jan (*fide* Melinda Jones). Apart from CBCs, four were seen in Pantego, NC, 27–28 Dec (Karen & Joe Bearden); and three were seen in Beaufort, NC, 4 Jan (Bob Austin, *fide* John Fussell) through 31 Jan (Ricky Davis, et al.).

**Snowy Plover:** An individual was found on the E end of Kiawah Island, SC, during a Piping Plover survey, 15 Dec (Aaron Given), and was seen into January. Interestingly, Kiawah Island has hosted several Snowy Plovers in the past few years.

**Wilson's Plover:** Six at the Rachel Carson Reserve in Carteret Co, NC, 7 Dec (John Fussell) provided a good winter count of this declining species. CBCs also found three on Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC, 3 Jan (*fide* Melinda Jones); two in McClellanville, SC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); and one in Winyah Bay, SC, 17 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover).

**Piping Plover:** High counts of this threatened species included 16 at the Rachel Carson Reserve near Beaufort, NC, 7 Dec (John Fussell); ten, six of which were color-banded birds from the Great Lakes population, at the S end of Topsail Island, NC, 10 Dec (Gilbert Grant); 12 on Kiawah Island, SC, 15 Dec (Aaron Given); 14 on the Lowcountry, SC CBC, 19 Dec (*fide* Ken Scott); and 13 on the Portsmouth Island, NC CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Peter Vankevich).

**Black-necked Stilt:** Five seen at the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, 3 Dec, with one continuing until 13 Jan (Steve Calver), provided a rare winter sighting.

**American Avocet:** 118 counted on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (Ricky Davis), was a great number for that inland location in winter. The winter's high count was 831 at the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, 3 Dec (Steve Calver).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Rare in winter, lone Spotted Sandpipers were found in Core Creek, NC, 14–20 Dec (Jack Fennell, Dick Barmore, Elizabeth White); in Beaufort, NC, 20 Dec (JoAnne Powell, Paula Gillikin, et al.); near the dam on Falls Lake, NC, 4–6 Jan (Ali Iyoob); below the dam on Kerr Lake, NC, during the CBC, 5 Jan (Brian Bockhahn); and at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal, 16 Jan (Rich & Susan Boyd).

**Whimbrel:** Lingering into winter was one at the Rachel Carson Reserve in Beaufort, NC, 7 Dec (John Fussell); five on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC CBC, 3 Jan (*fide* Melinda Jones); and two around Cape Lookout, NC, 21 Feb (Fussell, et al.).



Sandhill Crane, 1 Jan 2010, McClellanville SC. Photo by Stephen Thomas.

**Long-billed Curlew:** Five at Cape Romain NWR, SC, in early December and again on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS) were the only curlews reported this winter.

**Purple Sandpiper:** 51 videotaped on the S end of Wrightsville Beach, NC, near the Masonboro Inlet jetty, 3 Jan (Scott Winton) must have been one of the biggest flocks ever seen in the state. In South Carolina, a good count of 35 was made on the beach of Sullivan's Island, 24 Jan (Hal Currey).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** One on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan) was a great find for such a northern site in winter. A winter high count of 164 was made 3 Dec (Steve Calver) at the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, where Stilt Sandpipers are known to winter.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** This rare migrant has usually passed through our region by October, and thus of extreme interest was the sighting of an individual at Ft Fisher, NC, 3 Jan (Bruce Smithson, John Voigt), during the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC. This sighting was, perhaps, the latest ever made of this species in North Carolina.

**Red Phalarope:** This winter's best count was 307, seen during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 27 Jan (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** Individuals were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 6 and 14 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). Kittiwake sightings in the past couple of years have been few and far between.

**Black-headed Gull:** One, probably the same bird seen there in the fall, and possibly the same bird seen there in past years, was photographed from the causeway at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 28 Dec (Karen & Joe Bearden). Interestingly, the bird was not seen during the CBC the following day.

**Little Gull:** Sightings of individuals, in flight over the ocean with Bonaparte's Gulls, were made of an adult in Kitty Hawk, NC, 19 Dec (Ricky Davis); a first-winter bird in Ocean Isle, NC, 1 Jan (Taylor Piephoff); an adult off Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 3 Feb (Brian Patteson); and an adult in Nags Head, NC, 20 Feb (Joe Poston, et al.). On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, sightings included one 5 Feb, two 13 Feb, eight 14 Feb, and two 20 Feb (Patteson, et al.). Also, a first-winter bird was found resting on the beach with Forster's Terns and other gulls in Frisco, NC, 15 Feb (Patteson, Steve Howell, Ken Peterson).

**Laughing Gull:** Six on the Columbia, SC, CBC, 16 Dec (*fide* Steve Dennis) were unusual for an inland location in winter.

**Ring-billed Gull:** Locally unusual was the high number, 57, counted on Lake Julian in Skyland, NC, 16 Dec (Wayne Forsythe).

**California Gull:** An adult was seen and photographed at the Horry County Landfill in Conway, SC, 5–18 Jan (Chris Hill, sev. obs.). This sighting, pending acceptance by the SC BRC, provides the first documented record of this species in South Carolina. In North Carolina, a third-winter bird was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 27 Jan (Brian Patteson, et al.); and an adult was found on the beach at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 15 Feb (Patteson, Steve Howell, Ken Peterson).

**Thayer's Gull:** An adult was seen and photographed during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 20 Feb (Brian Patteson, Jeff Pippen, et al.). This stray is not found in the Carolinas every winter.

**Iceland Gull:** On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, first-winter individuals were seen 27 Jan and 5 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). Onshore, a second-winter bird was found on the beach at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 31 Jan (Patteson).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Inland sightings included two on Jordan Lake, NC, 1 Jan (Steve Shultz); one on the Falls Lake, NC CBC, 4 Jan (Brian Bockhahn); three on the Kerr Lake, NC CBC 5 Jan (Bockhahn); an adult on Lake Townsend, Greensboro, NC, 6 Jan (Henry Link); and about 15 at the Wake Co, NC, Landfill, 9 Jan (Derb Carter).

**Glaucous Gull:** First-winter individuals were seen at Wrightsville Beach, NC, where one was photographed during the week of the Wilmington CBC, 2 Jan (John Brunjes, *fide* Sam Cooper); at the Horry Co Landfill in Conway, SC, 6–16 Jan (Chris Hill, sev. obs.); and at the Wake Co, NC, Landfill, 9 Jan (Derb Carter).

**Great Black-backed Gull:** The best inland counts were five at the Wake Co, NC, landfill, 9 Jan (Derb Carter) and four, one adult and three juveniles, near the dam on Lake Gaston, NC, 8 Feb (Ricky Davis).

**Common Tern:** An individual found on the Santee NWR, SC CBC, 26 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe) was the only one reported in our region this winter.

**Sandwich Tern:** Two seen flying over North Pond at Pea Island NWR, 29 Dec (Kyle Kittelberger) were very unusual for that time of year. In South Carolina, CBCs found one at Winyah Bay, 17 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover); one on Litchfield-Pawleys Island, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill); and two on Hilton Head Island, SC, 20 Dec (*fide* Barry Lowes).

**Great Skua:** On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, an individual was seen 5 Feb; and two were seen on both 8 and 14 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Pomarine Jaeger:** This bulky jaeger is not often seen in winter, and an adult, well-seen, flying over the ocean during the Kitty Hawk, NC CBC, 19 Dec (Ricky Davis) was the winter's only report.

**Parasitic Jaeger:** Sightings included two on Edisto Island, SC, 11 Dec (David Abbott); five on the Kitty Hawk, NC CBC, 19 Dec (Ricky Davis); one on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); one on the Cape Hatteras, NC CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Pat Moore); two on the Southport-Bald



Iceland Gull, 27 Jan 2010, pelagic off Hatteras NC. Photo by Don Faulkner.



Head-Oak Islands, NC CBC, 3 Jan (*vide* Melinda Jones); and one off Ft Fisher, NC, 3 Jan (Davis).

**Dovekie:** Numbers of our smallest alcid were down compared to the last couple of winters. Individuals were seen on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC CBC, 3 Jan (*vide* NAS); in a line of Razorbills off the south beach of Cape Hatteras, NC, 2 Feb (Ricky Davis); in Surfside, SC, where a moribund bird was found, 6 Feb (*vide* Chris Hill); and off the pier in Nags Head, NC, 13 Feb (Jeff Lewis). Pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, counted eight 5 Feb, and 39, the winter's high count, 14 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Thick-billed Murre:** Only one murre was reported this winter—a fly-by Thick-billed on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 13 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Razorbill:** An epic flight of Razorbills took place off Atlantic Beach, NC, during an intense winter storm system, 30 Jan, where as many as 750+ were seen flying E during the course of the day from the Sheraton Hotel Pier (Ricky Davis, Harry LeGrand, et al.). According to John Fussell, "This is definitely the largest count of this species ever made in Carteret County." Another impressive flight was witnessed from the south beach of Cape Hatteras, NC, where 513 were counted flying east on 2 Feb (Davis). Earlier in the season, CBCs found ten at Cape Hatteras, NC, 27 Dec (*vide* Pat Moore); one off Wrightsville Beach NC, 2 Jan (Davis, Derb Carter); and five at Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC, 3 Jan (*vide* Melinda Jones). The peak count on pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, was 207 on 13 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). One at Murrells Inlet, SC, 15–20 Jan (Ritch Lilly) provided the most southern report.

**Atlantic Puffin:** On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 8+ were seen 5 Feb, and an individual was seen 13 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**White-winged Dove:** One was seen at a birdfeeder in Wilmington, NC, 8 Dec until late December (Bruce & Melinda Jones). Two were recorded on the Lowcountry, SC, CBC, 19 Dec (Ken Scott).

**Common Ground-Dove:** CBCs in South Carolina found ten at Winyah Bay, 17 Dec (*vide* Lex Glover); five in McClellanville, 20 Dec (*vide* NAS); one in Aiken, 24 Dec (*vide* Calvin Zippler); two at Santee NWR, 26 Dec (*vide* Dennis Forsythe); ten on Litchfield-Pawleys Island, 30 Dec (*vide* Chris Hill); and 30 in Charleston, 3 Jan (*vide* Jennifer McCarthey Tyrell).

**Short-eared Owl:** This winter's handful of sightings involved one on the Bodie-Pea Island, NC CBC, 28 Dec (*vide* Paul Sykes); two W of Lake Phelps, NC, during the Pettigrew SP CBC, 29 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); one in Snow's Marsh along the Cape Fear River in New Hanover Co, NC, 2 Jan (Ricky Davis); one on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC CBC, 3 Jan (*vide* Melinda Jones); and one at Alligator River NWR, NC, 14 Jan (Derb Carter). At the latter site, this winter was the first not to record this species on its CBC. Some birders speculate that excessive clearing of brush reduced the rodent population, and in turn, numbers of Short-eared Owls and other raptors.

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** One heard near the entrance to Saluda Shoals Park, SC, during the Lower Saluda CBC, 22 Dec (*fide* Jason Giovannone) was a great find for an inland location during winter. As small numbers of this species are known to winter in stands of pine trees along the coast, one found during Alligator River NWR, NC, CBC, 30 Dec (Allen Bryan), was a little more expected. Interestingly, unlike past winters, none were reported from favored sites along the Outer Banks, NC, such as Buxton Woods or the entrance road to the Bodie Island Lighthouse Pond.

**Whip-poor-will:** One seen at the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, 30 Dec (Steve Calver) was the only nightjar mentioned this winter.

**Black-chinned Hummingbird:** Doreen Cubie banded four Black-chinned Hummingbirds in South Carolina this winter—a juvenile male in Bluffton; an adult female on Seabrook Island; an juvenile female in Rockville; and a juvenile male on James Island. Interestingly, none were reported in North Carolina this winter.

**Rufous Hummingbird:** This species was well-reported again this winter. Two *Selasphorus* hummingbirds were photographed at feeders near Etowah, NC, 5 Dec through 5 Jan (Wayne Forsythe), which is an interesting find for the mountain locality. Not very far away, an adult male was banded in Moore, SC, 11 Dec (Bill Hilton, Martha & Jim Evans). Doreen Cubie banded five RUHUs in South Carolina this winter, one of which had returned to a yard in Lexington for a second straight winter. Also, a beautiful adult male allowed many birders good looks in Sunset Beach, NC, 3 Dec through the end of the period (Mary McDavit, sev. obs.).

**Ash-throated Flycatcher:** One was found along a northern portion of the causeway over Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 6 Dec (Al Gamache), where it was seen and photographed by many until it was last seen during the CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan).

**Western Kingbird:** Three were reported this winter—a “one-day wonder” at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 12 Dec (Paul Serridge, Shawn Smolen-Morton); an individual on the Cape Hatteras, NC CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Pat Moore); and a lingering individual at Fort Fisher, NC, 14-28 Jan (Greg Massey, Bruce Smithson, Ricky Davis, sev. obs.).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** One found on the Cape Hatteras, NC, CBC, 27 Dec (Jared Sparks, Harry Armistead) was a first for that count, and was relocated 31 Dec (Ricky Davis). Sightings of this species on the Outer Banks are quite rare.

**White-eyed Vireo:** Some of the better counts of this species were 12 on the Winyah Bay, SC CBC, 17 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover); six on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); three near North Harlowe, NC, 20 Dec (John



Rufous Hummingbird, 5 Dec 2009, Etowah, NC. Photo by Wayne Forsythe

Fussell); six on the Santee NWR, SC CBC, 26 Dec (Dennis Forsythe); five on the Cape Hatteras, NC CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Pat Moore); four on the Alligator River NWR, NC CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis); and three at another location near North Harlowe, NC, 19 Jan (Fussell).

**Bell's Vireo:** One was photographed on a northern portion of the causeway over Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 27 Dec (Allen Bryan). The bird was not seen during the CBC, 29 Dec, probably due to high winds, but was relocated 30 Dec (Bob Lewis). This sighting provides the fourth documented state record of this species for North Carolina.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Quite late were four on Edisto Island, SC, 11 Dec (David Abbott); one in Sunset Beach, NC, 11 Dec (Greg Massey, Harry Sell); one on the Lower Saluda, SC CBC, 22 Dec (*fide* Jason Giovannone); one near the WTP in Goldsboro, NC, 24 Dec (Eric Dean); and one at the WTP in Ocean Isle, NC, 1 Jan (Taylor Piephoff). Winter sightings of this species seem to have increased in recent years.

**Cave Swallow:** Sightings of this rare-but-regular late fall/early winter vagrant included two at the S end of Wrightsville Beach, NC, 8 Dec (John Ennis); 15 on Edisto Island, SC, 11 Dec (David Abbott); eight in Sunset Beach, NC, 11 Dec (Greg Massey, Harry Sell); eight at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 12 Dec (Shawn Smolen-Morton); four on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); and four at the WTP in Ocean Isle, NC, 29 Dec (Taylor Piephoff).

**Barn Swallow:** Lingering into winter were individuals in Sunset Beach, NC, 11 Dec (Greg Massey, Harry Sell) and at the WTP in Ocean Isle, NC, 1 Jan (Taylor Piephoff).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Individuals seen in Hiddenite, NC, 6 Dec (Ron & Garnet Underwood); on the Clemson, SC CBC, 19 Dec (*fide* Drew Lanham); and in Townville, SC, 20 Dec (Simon Harvey) were quite late for sites in the western piedmont.

**Varied Thrush:** Until this winter, there was only one accepted record of this species in North Carolina. That number sure changed this winter, though, when three (!) Varied Thrushes were photographed in the state. The first sighting was of an adult male, photographed in a yard in Chalybeate Springs, NC, 2 Jan (Angie & Bill DeLozier). The bird was not seen again until, assuming it's the same bird, it was found moribund in Angier, NC, 30 Jan (*fide* Becky Desjardins). The second sighting was of an adult male, photographed beneath a feeder in Fletcher, NC, 1 Feb (Lorene & Charles Gudger, *fide* Wayne Forsythe). This bird was never relocated. The state's third sighting was of a juvenile bird, seen and photographed by many in a yard in Mebane, NC, 13–14 Feb (Steve Wedge, *sev. obs.*). In South Carolina, one was briefly seen amongst a flock of Robins in a yard in Columbia, SC, 15 Feb (Caroline Eastman). If accepted by the SC BRC, this sighting would provide the fifth record of this species in the state.

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** This species is known to winter along the coast, but sightings west of the coastal plain are less common. Sightings of note included three on the Charlotte, NC CBC, 26 Dec (*fide* Ken Kneidel); one on



the Jordan Lake, NC CBC, 3 Jan (Terry Logue, *fide* Norm Budnitz); one at a feeder in Columbia, SC, 12 Jan (James Wilson); and one at a feeder in Whispering Pines, NC, for a second year in a row, throughout the winter (Susan Campbell).

**Nashville Warbler:** One found along River Rd, E of the Cape Fear River, in Cumberland Co, NC, 4 Dec (Brian Bockhahn) was either a rare wintering bird or a very late migrant. Another observed for 30+ minutes as it foraged in some ivy on a large sycamore tree at Latta Park in Charlotte, NC, 19 Jan (Tom Sanders) must have been wintering, as it was too late or too early to have been a migrant.

**Northern Parula:** CBCs found two of these birds wintering in our region—one along the causeway over Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 30 Dec (Jeff Lewis) and another in the ACE Basin, SC, 27 Dec (*fide* NAS). A male found in the Elizabethan Gardens in Manteo, NC, 14 Feb (Lewis), was either wintering or a very early migrant.

**Yellow Warbler:** One was found along the causeway over Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, during the week of the CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan) but not on the day of the count, probably due to high winds.

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** Extremely rare in winter, single Black-throated Green Warblers were found on the USC campus in Columbia, SC, for a second year in a row, 4 Dec and 5 Jan (John Grego); on the Pee Dee Area, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* David McLean); and on Roanoke Island, NC, 28 Jan (Jeff Lewis).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** Inland and/or north of the species' typical winter range along the southern coast was one in a yard in Chapel Hill, NC, 26 Dec–4 Jan (Tom & Barbara Driscoll); two on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (Ricky Davis); and one in a yard in Lexington, SC, 4 Jan through the end of the period (Marion & Edith Clark).

**Prairie Warbler:** Sightings of this rare-but-regular wintering warbler included one at Ft Fisher, NC, 14 Dec (Daniel Hueholt); two on the Winyah Bay, SC CBC 17 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover); three on the Lowcountry, SC CBC, 19 Dec (*fide* Ken Scott); two on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); and one on the Alligator River NWR, NC CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** This species is another rare-but-regular wintering warbler, more likely to be found along the southern coast. A female/juvenile in Charlotte, NC, 16–17 Jan (*fide* Ron Clark) was an excellent find for a location so far inland. Some of the more northern sightings were of two on Roanoke Island, NC, 8 Dec through the end of the period (Jeff Lewis); one on the W side of Lake Phelps, NC, 10 Dec (Brian Bockhahn, Matt Daw, Ali Iyoob); one in Pine Knoll Shores, NC, 13 Dec (Matthew Gould); one on the Kitty Hawk, NC CBC, 19 Dec (*fide* Lewis); three on the Pee Dee Area, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* David McLean); one on the Bodie-Pea Island, NC CBC, 28 Dec (*fide* Paul Sykes); four on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); and one at Fort Macon SP, Atlantic Beach, NC, 31 Jan (Randy Newman, *fide* Fussell).

**Ovenbird:** The wintering Ovenbird stronghold that is Buxton Woods again harbored an excellent number this winter, with 16 counted on the Cape Hatteras, NC CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Pat Moore). Three were seen on Roanoke Island, NC, this winter, one of which visited a yard for a second winter in a row, 14 Jan through the end of the period (Jeff Lewis). Individuals were also found on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); and at Pinckney NWR, SC, 21 Feb (Aaron Given).

**Northern Waterthrush:** Two were seen at the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, 13 Jan, and at least one of these birds spent the whole winter there (Steve Calver).

**Common Yellowthroat:** One on the Spartanburg SC CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Lyle Campbell) was a good find for a site so far from the coast.

**Wilson's Warbler:** Only one was reported in the Carolinas this winter—a male, well-observed as it foraged along Buckeye Trail off Capital Blvd, in Raleigh, NC, 14 Jan (John Finnegan).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** An individual that visited a feeder in Greensboro, NC, where it primarily fed on sunflower hearts, 10 Jan through the end of the period (Lou Skrabec) was quite unusual because most wintering are found along the coast. Less unusual, but still noteworthy, was one on the Bodie-Pea Island NC CBC, 28 Dec (Ricky Davis); two on the Mattamuskeet NWR NC CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); four on the



Yellow-breasted Chat, 10 Jan 2010, Greensboro, NC. Photo by Lou Skrabec.

Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands NC CBC, 3 Jan (*fide* Melinda Jones); and one in a yard in Morehead City, NC, throughout the period (John Fussell).

**Bachman's Sparrow:** 52 individuals were counted in surveys of the S Croatan National Forest (NF), NC, Jan–Feb, mostly in the recently burned area around Millis Rd where there was, at least, a moderate growth of wiregrass (John Fussell). Fussell thinks that “it is safe to assume that literally hundreds of birds overwintered in this area this year.” Also of note was a lack of this species in a nearby USFS Longleaf Pine restoration site, most certainly due to the lack of wiregrass (Fussell).

**American Tree Sparrow:** Not found every winter in the Carolinas, an individual was well-studied amongst a flock of Chipping Sparrows at Sandhills NWR, SC, 4 Dec (Kevin Markham).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** There were only two reports of this rare sparrow made this winter—one in the Red Hill area of NE Edgecombe Co, NC, 12 Jan (Ricky Davis) and two in Iredell Co, NC, 17 Jan (Monroe Pannell).

**Vesper Sparrow:** Some of the better counts of this uncommon sparrow were 12 in a weedy field near ILM airport in Wilmington, NC, 23 Dec (Daniel Hueholt); eight on the Pee Dee Area, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* David McLean); six on the Santee NWR, SC CBC, 26 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe); and three on the Gastonia NC CBC, 19 Dec (*fide* Steve Tracy).

**Lark Sparrow:** One seen and heard singing in a yard in NE Raleigh, NC, 19–21 Feb (Suzanna O'Donnell, Ali Iyoob) was locally very unusual. An individual on the Cape Hatteras, NC, CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Pat Moore) was found at a more expected location.

**Henslow's Sparrow:** This winter resident of the southern coastal plain is often very hard to find. Five were seen at different sites along Millis Rd in S Croatan NF, NC, in February, all in recently burned, longleaf pine/wiregrass habitat (John Fussell). An individual was seen in a weedy field near ILM airport in Wilmington, NC, 23 Dec (Daniel Hueholt). CBCs in South Carolina found three at Santee NWR, 26 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe); two at the Savannah River Site, 18 Dec (*fide* Mark Vukovich); and two in the ACE Basin, 27 Dec (*fide* NAS).

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** South Carolina CBCs turned up single Le Conte's Sparrows, another elusive winter resident of the southern coastal plain, at McClellanville, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); at Congaree Swamp, 20 Dec (*fide* John Grego); and at Santee NWR, 26 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** Four were seen on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC CBC, 3 Jan (*fide* Melinda Jones), providing a good count of this species for our region. Elsewhere, individuals were found at Sandhills NWR, SC, 4 Dec (Kevin Markham); along Shore Dr, west of Lake Phelps, NC, 10 and 29 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); on the Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill); on the Alligator River NWR, NC CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis); on the Pee Dee NWR, NC CBC, 2 Jan (*fide* Don Fink); and in the Red Hill area of NE Edgecombe Co, NC, 12 Jan (Ricky Davis).



Lapland Longspur, 21 Feb 2010, Mecklenburg Co, NC. Photo by Kevin Metcalf.



**White-crowned Sparrow:** 90 were counted along Leggett Rd in Edgecombe Co, NC, 15 Feb, in an area that “hosts excellent numbers of this species each winter” (Ricky Davis).

**Lapland Longspur:** Three were found in a field NE of Rocky Mount, NC, during the CBC, 18 Dec (Brian Bockhahn). Up to five were seen, and photographed, in fields and parking areas surrounding Lowe’s Motor Speedway in Concord, NC, 28 Dec through the end of the period (Jeff Lemons, Tom Sanders, sev. obs.). “Very unexpected” was an individual photographed in a backyard in Huntersville, NC, 21 Feb (Kevin Metcalf), providing the first record of this species in Mecklenburg County.

**Snow Bunting:** This species was again scarce this winter, with only two reports made—individuals on CBCs at Bodie-Pea Island, NC, 28 Dec (*fide* Paul Sykes) and Alligator River NWR, NC, a first for the count, 30 Dec (Ricky Davis).

**Summer Tanager:** A female, possibly the same bird seen last winter, wintered in a yard in Wilmington, NC, for a second year in a row (Amy Williamson). A female also visited a yard in Leicester, NC, 22 Jan through the end of the period (Doug Johnston), and provided the first documented winter sighting of this species in our mountains. Elsewhere, CBCs found this very rare winterer on Bodie-Pea Island, NC, 28 Dec (Allen Bryan) and in Greenville, NC, the week of 3 Jan (*fide* Veronica Pantelidis).



Summer Tanager, 3 Feb 2010, Leicester, NC. Photo by Doug Johnston.

**Western Tanager:** This winter’s sightings of this rare winter visitor were of a bright-plumaged female in a yard in Florence, SC, in mid-December, where it was photographed and recorded on the Pee Dee Area CBC, 20 Dec (Shawn Smolen-Morton); an individual on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC CBC, 3 Jan (*fide* Melinda Jones); and a rather dull-plumaged female at a feeder near Davidson, NC, 9 Jan through the end of the period (Ginger Walter, Jeff Lemons, sev. obs.).

**Indigo Bunting:** A juvenile found on the Santee NWR, SC CBC, 26 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe) was a first for that count and an excellent winter find.

**Painted Bunting:** Some of the more interesting reports of Painted Buntings visiting feeders involved an adult male photographed in Peachland, NC, in early January (*fide* Dennis Burnette); an adult male photographed in North Wilkesboro, NC, in mid-January (Bryant Woods, *fide* John Gerwin); two “green” birds visiting a feeder in Kitty Hawk, NC, in January through the

end of the period (Jeff Lewis); and 21 (!), including six adult males (!), in Marshallberg, NC, this winter (Bobby Montgomery, *vide* John Fussell).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Individuals found on CBCs in McClellanville, SC, 20 Dec (*vide* NAS) and Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC, 30 Dec (*vide* Chris Hill) were the only ones reported this winter.

**Rusty Blackbird:** Some of the larger counts of this declining species were 907 on the ACE Basin, SC CBC, 27 Dec (*vide* NAS); 389 on the Santee NWR, SC CBC, 26 Dec (*vide* Dennis Forsythe); 275 on the Wilmington, NC CBC, 2 Jan (*vide* Sam Cooper); and about 200 at Lake Conestee Nature Park in Greenville, SC, 16–21 Feb (Paul Serridge).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** This winter's sightings of this western vagrant were of six, two males and four females, at Open Grounds Farm in Carteret Co, NC, 29 Jan (Ricky Davis et al.); five, four males and one female, in White Plains, NC, during the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC, 29 Dec (John Fussell); and two on the Charleston, SC CBC, 3 Jan (*vide* NAS).

**Bullock's Oriole:** A juvenile male visited a feeder near Davidson, NC, where it was seen and photographed by many, 20 Jan through the end of the period (Ginger Walter, Taylor Piephoff, sev. obs.).

**Baltimore Oriole:** Some of the higher counts at feeders included 15 in Goldsboro, NC, 16 Feb (Mary Bridges), 14 in Raleigh, NC, in January (Lena Gallitano), and 12 in New Bern, NC, 14 Dec (Al Gamache).



Brewer's Blackbird, 29 Jan 2010, Open Grounds Farm, NC. Photo by Ali Iyooob.



Bullock's Oriole, 23 Jan 2010, Cabarrus Co, NC. Photo by Phil Fowler.

## Fifty Years Ago in *The Chat*—June 1960

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B. R. Chamberlain reported on the “fifth invasion” of Evening Grosbeaks. The first known flights of Evening Grosbeaks to reach the Carolinas had been in the winter of 1952–53, and subsequent flights occurred in 1954–55, 1955–56, 1957–58, and 1959–60. Chamberlain had previously (*Chat* 22:51–54) reported on the fourth flight, and he noted that while reports on that flight had been readily offered, because the species was a life bird for many, reports on the fifth flight had been much more difficult to elicit. “As the mounting cost of sunflower seed was reckoned, enthusiasm waned”. Chamberlain received reports from 37 locations in North Carolina, 12 in South Carolina, and 4 in Georgia. The earliest report was 11 Nov but most of the reports were from mid-February to the end of April, with the final report being 15 May in Atlanta, GA. The larger groups reported were in the order of 25–50 birds, with the largest being “200 or more”. In one case a group consumed 100 pounds of sunflower seed in a week or less. Several banded birds were recovered, most having been banded in early 1959, but one individual had been banded in Massachusetts in 1953. Today, Evening Grosbeak flights seem a thing of the past, with the only substantial flights of the last two decades having been in 1993–1994 and 1995–96.

Chamberlain also summarized the 12 spring counts for 1960. There was concern over unusually low counts of Eastern Phoebe and Eastern Bluebird for the second consecutive year. Of 210 species reported, only 18 were reported in numbers of 200 or more on at least one count. Among these was House Sparrow, which is no longer seen in such numbers. A male Bachman’s Warbler was seen and heard by the entire census group near Bull’s Island.

In General Field Notes, the editors noted that “The winter of 1959–60 was one of the most severe on record in the Carolinas. Sub-freezing nights and days in March robbed our wildlife of food and water too long. Many of our birds perished.” Several people submitted reports of finding large numbers of dead birds, including Robins, Eastern Meadowlarks, Eastern Bluebirds, and Myrtle Warblers.

Ernest Cutts reported finding three nests of American Coot at Magnolia Gardens, the first confirmed nesting in South Carolina (although young had been observed at the same location in the previous year).

—Kent Fiala, editor



# CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

[www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org)

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
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## General Field Notes Editors

North Carolina

South Carolina

## Briefs for the Files

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## 2010 Spring Bird Counts in South Carolina

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### Lois Stacey

418 Deepwood Pl., North Augusta, SC, 29841  
*croakie@comcast.net*

Seven counties held spring migration counts this year, and those seven groups totaled 207 species. Among the most unusual birds found were two Brown Creepers—one in Aiken County and one in Spartanburg—and an American Golden-Plover in Charleston. Several late ducks were seen including American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Redhead and Ruddy Duck. Northern Bobwhite were found on five of the counts, and five Swallow-tailed Kites were recorded over three counts. Overall there were 25 species of warblers on the count including seven Swainson's Warblers.

### Compiler's Comments

#### **Aiken County: 121 species, 4111 individuals**

Coordinator: Anne Waters  
1621 Apple Valley Drive  
Augusta, GA 30906

Participants: Dorie Brennehan, Ron Brennehan, Lee Dane, Carol Eldridge, Larry Eldridge, Drew Grainger, Judy Gregory, Gene Howard, Christine Huzella, Paul Koehler, Debbie LaBerge, Matt Malin, George Reeves, Lois Stacey, Mark Vukovich, Alice Walker, Douglas Walker, Anne Waters, Gene Zielinski, Calvin Zippler

#### **Spartanburg County: 127 species, 5162 individuals**

Coordinator: Lyle Campbell  
126 Greengate Lane  
Spartanburg, SC 29307

Participants: Doug Allen, Carole Anderson, Laura Bannon, Tim Brown, Dan Bryant, Lewanna Caldwell, Lyle Campbell, Sarah Campbell, Alan Chalmers, Dan Codispoti, Vince Conners, Onoosh Gahagan, Alan Gray, Rebecca Gray, Simon Harvey, J. B. Hines, Frank Hull, Phyllis Hull, Herb Kay, Mary Kuster, Angela Miller, Jim Miller, Margaret Miller, Moss Miller, Nancy Odum, Glenn Peterson, Eva Pratt, Doug Rayner, Gemeli Sang, Bob Scott, Mack Shealy, Kathleen Soza, Joan Tangwar, Kristin Taylor, Gerald Thurmond, M. B. Ulmer, Kay Whilden, Dan Wootton, Nancy Wootton

Forty birders found 127 species of birds in Spartanburg County. Best bird was a Swainson's Warbler. Ten Northern Bobwhite were tallied. A lake survey of swallows nesting under bridges found 330 Cliff Swallows and 294 Barn Swallows. Three Great Egrets provided the first spring record of that species for the county. Ospreys were nesting on Lake Blalock near the dam.

**Cherokee County: 80 species, 1042 individuals**

Coordinator: Lyle Campbell  
126 Greengate Lane  
Spartanburg, SC 29307

Participants: Felicia Burnett, Claude Cobb, Jr., J. B. Hines, Maxi Nix, Rebecca Poole

Five birders contributed to the Cherokee count this spring, documenting a very respectable 78 species.

**Charleston County: 148 species, 8289 individuals**

Coordinator: Andy Harrison  
35 Cross Creek Drive, Apt P-7  
Charleston, SC 29412

Participants: David Abbott, Thomas Ackerson, Clint A. Ball, Carl Broadwell, Robert Drew, Sarah Ernst, Judy Fairchild, Reggie Fairchild, Cindy Floyd, Dennis M. Forsythe, Aaron Given, Andy Harrison, Teri Lynn Herbert, Donald P. Jones, Lois M. Jones, Rob Lane, Pete Laurie, Patrick Markham, Mary Catherine Martin, David C. Mclean Jr., Keith L. McCullough, Carl R. Miller, Catherine G. Miller, Paul M. Nolan, Perry E. Nugent, Felicia J. Sanders, Chris Snook, Bill Sullivan, Mary Kay Sullivan, Karen E. N. Thompson, Joel F. Thompson, Jennifer M. Tyrrell, Craig Watson, John E. Weinstein, Lori Sheridan Wilson

The 2010 Charleston Spring Bird Count was held on 2 May 2010. There were 35 participants divided into 10 parties, who tallied 72.75 hours in the field. The day began overcast and warm (with slight fog on the water), but the skies cleared quickly and the morning hours became mostly sunny and breezy. Some clouds returned in the afternoon, and the windy conditions continued. We observed 148 total species and 8289 individuals (for a bird/party hour average of 113.9).

Highlights of this year's count included the following: The Dewees Island party (leader Cathy Miller; David Abbott, Carl Broadwell, Robert Drew, Judy Fairchild, Reggie Fairchild, Cindy Floyd, Aaron Given, Pete Laurie, Carl Miller, Chris Snook, Bill Sullivan, Mary Kay Sullivan, Lori Sheridan Wilson) once again recorded the highest species total and most individuals, with 80 and 2201, respectively. (The Bulls Island party came in a close second with 78 species.) They were the only group to report Wood Stork (2), Common Ground-Dove (7), Yellow Warbler (1), and Scarlet Tanager (1). On Bulls Island, leader Felicia Sanders and Mary Catherine Martin observed Glossy Ibis (2), Blue-winged Teal (7), American Wigeon (1), Redhead (1), Black Tern (3), and Gray Kingbird (1). They watched the Gray Kingbird for about 15 minutes and provided excellent details. The Capers Island party (leader Clint Ball; Tom Ackerson, Rob Lane) reported Sharp-shinned Hawk (1), American Golden-Plover (1), Red Knot (30), and Sedge Wren (1). They observed the American Golden-Plover from very close range among several Black-bellied Plovers and provided excellent details on this bird (also for the Sedge Wren, which they heard but did not see). The I'on Swamp group (leader Perry Nugent; Keith McCullough,



Karen Thompson, Joel Thompson) observed Ruby-throated Hummingbird (8), Red-cockaded Woodpecker (4), Northern Flicker (1), and Worm-eating Warbler (1). In the Sewee Preserve section of Porcher's Bluff, leader Craig Watson (also with Andy Harrison on a return visit late in the day) recorded Western Sandpiper (1), Veery (1), Yellow-rumped Warbler (2), Black-and-white Warbler (1), and White-throated Sparrow (1). Dennis Forsythe observed King Rail (3) in the Airport area, and the Guerin's Bridge Road party (leader Don Jones; Teri Lynn Herbert, Lois Jones, Patrick Markham) reported Mallard (2), Swallow-tailed Kite (1), and Eastern Wood-Pewee (1). Leader Andy Harrison and David Mclean observed Rock Pigeon (8) and Black-throated Blue Warbler (1) in Cainhoy. There were two parties birding in the Sewee Road area, one led by Paul Nolan (also Sarah Ernst and John Weinstein) and the other by Jen Tyrell, and their combined lists included the only Cooper's Hawk (1) reported on the count.

As in 2009, there were two parties (Perry Nugent and his group in I'on Swamp and Dennis Forsythe in the Airport area) who spent time owling before dawn. Thanks to their efforts we recorded eight Eastern Screech-Owls (one also seen on Dewees Island), one Great Horned Owl (one also observed on Dewees Island), five Barred Owls, and 16 Chuck-will's-widows (one also reported on Dewees Island).

Our shorebird and seabird totals were up this year in general compared to 2009. Once again we observed good numbers of Painted Buntings (eight reporting parties with a total of 84 individuals). Interestingly, four parties reported Bobolinks (94 total), many of which were seen in trees. Among our many misses were the following species: Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Piping Plover, Caspian Tern, Eurasian Collared-Dove, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Wood Thrush (although a count week bird was heard in the Porcher's Bluff area), Yellow-throated Vireo, Kentucky Warbler, Ovenbird, Swainson's Warbler, Eastern Meadowlark and Field Sparrow.

### **Greenville County: 106 species, 3571 individuals**

Coordinator: J. B. Hines  
5258 Chesnee Highway  
Chesnee, SC 29323

Participants: Jerry Johnson, Steve Compton, Chris Clark, Noah Clark, David Kirk, Jane Kramer, Hilda Reese, Kent Bedenbaugh, Denise Dupon, Jeff Click, Jeff Catlin, Simon Harvey, Chip Gilbert, Sarah Gilbert, J. B. Hines, Louis Womble, Cindy Womble, Rob Hunnings, Dennis Trapp, Paul Serridge, Barbara Serridge

### **Lexington County: 89 species, 1505 individuals**

Coordinator Molly Bonnell  
202 Cannon Trail Rd.  
Lexington, SC

Participants: Andrea Ceselski, Barbara Darden, Patricia Voelker, Roger Smith, Judy Hurley, Steve Dennis, Jerry Griggs, Greg Fitzpatrick

**Jasper County: 130 species, 7818 individuals**

Coordinator: Steve Wagner  
 313 E. 54th St.  
 Savannah, GA 31405

Participants: Dot Bambach, Sandy Beasley, Steve Culver, Ellie Covington,  
 Matt Ryan, Steve Wagner, 14 Ogeechee Audubon field trip participants

Table 1. Spring 2010 bird counts in South Carolina

	Aike	Spar	Cher	Char	Gree	Lexi	Jasp	Total
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Canada Goose	45	249	26	22	85	27	0	454
Wood Duck	56	21	2	22	29	16	9	155
American Wigeon	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Mallard	22	128	1	2	65	16	40	274
Mottled Duck	0	0	0	53	0	0	226	279
Blue-winged Teal	6	4	0	7	2	0	18	37
Northern Shoveler	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Redhead	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Ruddy Duck	0	1	0	0	0	0	44	45
Northern Bobwhite	8	11	2	2	0	2	0	25
Wild Turkey	9	1	8	4	6	8	0	36
Pied-billed Grebe	0	0	0	3	5	0	0	8
Brown Pelican	0	0	0	169	0	0	1	170
Double-crested Cormorant	4	17	0	63	6	2	12	104
Anhinga	6	0	0	19	0	0	47	72
American Bittern	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Least Bittern	0	0	0	6	0	0	4	10
Great Blue Heron	13	22	3	85	12	4	2	141
Great Egret	9	3	0	89	1	0	30	132
Snowy Egret	0	0	0	110	0	0	65	175
Little Blue Heron	7	0	0	20	0	0	12	39
Tricolored Heron	0	0	0	19	0	0	58	77
Cattle Egret	61	0	0	40	0	0	5	106
Green Heron	5	1	1	31	3	1	17	59
Black-crowned Night-Heron	0	0	0	11	0	0	1	12
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
White Ibis	6	0	0	46	0	0	73	125
Glossy Ibis	0	0	0	2	0	0	64	66
Roseate Spoonbill	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	12
Wood Stork	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Black Vulture	122	16	9	47	3	20	25	242
Turkey Vulture	36	25	15	104	14	31	20	245
Osprey	4	4	5	27	3	1	4	48
Swallow-tailed Kite	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	5
Mississippi Kite	37	0	0	7	0	2	6	52
Bald Eagle	3	0	0	4	0	4	1	12
Northern Harrier	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	5
Cooper's Hawk	1	2	0	1	2	3	1	10
Red-shouldered Hawk	13	7	2	19	6	3	1	51
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	5
Red-tailed Hawk	11	13	4	11	4	3	1	34
American Kestrel	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3

	Aike	Spar	Cher	Char	Gree	Lexi	Jasp	Total
Clapper Rail	0	0	0	23	0	0	2	25
King Rail	1	0	0	3	0	0	2	6
Purple Gallinule	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	10
Common Moorhen	0	0	0	31	0	0	77	108
American Coot	0	0	0	8	0	0	36	44
Black-bellied Plover	0	0	0	158	0	0	31	189
American Golden-Plover	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Wilson's Plover	0	0	0	14	0	0	25	39
Semipalmated Plover	0	0	0	730	0	0	273	1003
Killdeer	10	21	14	18	5	5	26	99
American Oystercatcher	0	0	0	36	0	0	0	36
Black-necked Stilt	0	0	0	32	0	0	202	234
American Avocet	0	0	0	0	0	0	209	209
Spotted Sandpiper	5	13	2	24	1	1	4	50
Solitary Sandpiper	4	7	3	2	0	0	8	24
Greater Yellowlegs	0	2	2	32	0	0	17	53
Willet	0	0	0	44	0	0	26	70
Lesser Yellowlegs	9	2	0	25	0	0	183	219
Whimbrel	0	0	0	202	0	0	0	202
Ruddy Turnstone	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	9
Red Knot	0	0	0	30	0	0	0	30
Sanderling	0	0	0	133	0	0	0	133
Semipalmated Sandpiper	6	0	0	30	0	0	474	510
Western Sandpiper	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Least Sandpiper	7	0	1	18	0	0	174	200
peep, sp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	520	520
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	6
Dunlin	0	0	0	279	0	0	470	749
Stilt Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	0	0	216	216
Short-billed Dowitcher	0	0	0	111	0	0	143	254
Dowitcher, sp.	0	0	0	25	0	0	42	67
American Woodcock	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
Laughing Gull	0	0	0	368	0	0	277	645
Ring-billed Gull	0	6	0	3	0	0	50	59
Herring Gull	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	11
Least Tern	0	0	0	27	0	0	307	334
Gull-billed Tern	0	0	0	55	0	0	84	139
Black Tern	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Common Tern	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	16
Forster's Tern	0	0	0	33	0	0	3	36
Royal Tern	0	0	0	506	0	0	90	596
Sandwich Tern	0	0	0	53	0	0	0	53
Black Skimmer	0	0	0	450	0	0	197	647
Rock Pigeon	12	59	13	8	38	21	2	153
Eurasian Collared-Dove	5	21	0	0	2	1	0	29
Mourning Dove	231	195	41	69	92	50	48	726
Common Ground-Dove	0	0	0	7	0	0	2	9
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	33	9	2	32	0	7	4	87
Barn Owl	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Eastern Screech-Owl	2	4	0	9	0	0	0	15
Great Horned Owl	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	6
Barred Owl	11	7	0	5	5	1	2	31
Common Nighthawk	4	11	3	4	0	0	3	25
Chuck-will's-widow	33	15	3	17	4	3	6	81
Eastern Whip-poor-will	7	6	4	0	3	0	0	20
Chimney Swift	67	136	29	14	46	13	12	317
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	9	15	1	8	7	4	3	47



	Aike	Spar	Cher	Char	Gree	Lexi	Jasp	Total
Belted Kingfisher	3	8	2	7	7	0	0	27
Red-headed Woodpecker	28	8	0	7	3	5	10	61
Red-bellied Woodpecker	51	66	11	39	53	17	13	250
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Downy Woodpecker	16	16	0	12	12	11	6	73
Hairy Woodpecker	4	2	0	0	3	0	0	9
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
Northern Flicker	4	9	1	1	9	5	1	30
Pileated Woodpecker	27	7	4	18	28	2	6	92
Eastern Wood-Pewee	36	2	1	1	0	9	6	55
Acadian Flycatcher	35	7	0	3	0	4	2	51
Eastern Phoebe	8	37	7	0	33	1	0	86
Great Crested Flycatcher	81	18	8	219	3	29	29	387
Eastern Kingbird	44	34	8	49	2	15	12	164
Gray Kingbird	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Loggerhead Shrike	2	3	0	2	1	3	0	11
White-eyed Vireo	82	8	5	46	32	8	11	192
Yellow-throated Vireo	10	5	2	0	5	0	4	26
Blue-headed Vireo	1	3	0	0	44	0	0	48
Red-eyed Vireo	66	53	13	64	16	12	14	238
Blue Jay	83	134	37	46	147	55	15	517
American Crow	91	190	72	57	76	45	17	548
Fish Crow	15	13	0	46	10	7	8	99
Common Raven	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
Horned Lark	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Purple Martin	11	154	14	39	58	3	3	282
Tree Swallow	3	4	0	43	31	0	170	251
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	9	26	5	9	20	26	1	96
Bank Swallow	0	2	6	0	0	0	0	8
Cliff Swallow	10	330	80	0	0	0	0	420
Barn Swallow	160	294	28	202	79	9	107	879
Carolina Chickadee	43	60	12	37	66	41	9	268
Tufted Titmouse	100	77	13	65	87	33	17	392
Red-breasted Nuthatch	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	3	3	0	11	0	2	20
Brown-headed Nuthatch	15	15	0	32	11	13	2	88
Brown Creeper	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Carolina Wren	112	65	3	128	79	92	37	516
House Wren	0	10	0	0	2	2	0	14
Sedge Wren	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Marsh Wren	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	4
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	0	3	0	0	11	0	0	14
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	67	59	9	14	94	22	18	283
Eastern Bluebird	58	171	29	44	57	36	8	403
Veery	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	3
Swainson's Thrush	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Hermit Thrush	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Wood Thrush	8	11	1	0	5	5	1	31
American Robin	23	325	57	0	68	36	0	509
Gray Catbird	7	9	3	8	3	7	34	71
Northern Mockingbird	79	173	34	52	60	61	36	495
Brown Thrasher	22	74	7	28	27	26	16	200
European Starling	36	154	40	15	119	16	12	392
Cedar Waxwing	260	36	37	2	83	70	64	552
Blue-winged Warbler	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Golden-winged Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

	Aike	Spar	Cher	Char	Gree	Lexi	Jasp	Total
Northern Parula	111	12	0	116	21	13	22	295
Yellow Warbler	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	4
Cape May Warbler	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Black-throated Blue Warbler	1	1	0	1	3	8	0	14
Yellow-rumped Warbler	0	7	0	2	48	0	3	60
Black-throated Green Warbler	0	0	0	0	80	0	0	80
Yellow-throated Warbler	33	7	0	20	1	6	14	81
Pine Warbler	103	17	6	57	28	24	18	253
Prairie Warbler	11	2	1	26	5	0	2	47
Palm Warbler	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
Blackpoll Warbler	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Black-and-white Warbler	1	0	0	1	46	1	0	49
American Redstart	6	3	0	0	0	5	0	14
Prothonotary Warbler	28	2	1	35	0	5	11	82
Worm-eating Warbler	0	0	1	1	34	1	0	37
Swainson's Warbler	4	1	0	0	1	1	0	7
Ovenbird	1	6	1	0	48	3	0	59
Northern Waterthrush	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Louisiana Waterthrush	9	2	0	0	30	0	0	41
Kentucky Warbler	4	3	0	0	1	0	2	10
Common Yellowthroat	15	39	7	45	94	11	40	251
Hooded Warbler	11	4	0	35	12	3	2	67
Yellow-breasted Chat	45	18	7	2	0	8	7	87
Eastern Towhee	50	43	19	73	67	27	21	300
Bachman's Sparrow	2	0	0	11	0	0	3	16
Chipping Sparrow	9	53	9	0	26	4	0	101
Field Sparrow	4	20	5	0	23	0	0	52
Savannah Sparrow	0	12	0	2	27	0	16	57
Grasshopper Sparrow	0	14	3	0	1	0	0	18
Song Sparrow	0	23	0	0	25	0	0	48
Swamp Sparrow	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	5
White-throated Sparrow	0	9	0	1	84	0	0	94
Dark-eyed Junco	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
Summer Tanager	85	29	0	27	0	18	15	174
Scarlet Tanager	2	4	0	1	10	0	1	18
Northern Cardinal	404	204	29	357	140	166	43	1343
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
Blue Grosbeak	24	5	9	18	0	15	8	79
Indigo Bunting	123	82	17	27	1	44	26	320
Painted Bunting	8	0	0	84	0	1	18	111
Bobolink	6	115	0	94	0	2	514	731
Red-winged Blackbird	99	91	38	760	368	14	942	2312
Eastern Meadowlark	63	51	32	0	14	0	0	160
Common Grackle	100	299	64	54	145	45	58	765
Boat-tailed Grackle	0	0	0	224	0	0	209	433
Brown-headed Cowbird	31	47	14	53	44	29	39	257
Orchard Oriole	11	8	0	30	0	0	18	67
Baltimore Oriole	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Purple Finch	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	13
House Finch	24	58	11	16	18	25	0	152
American Goldfinch	11	78	7	0	154	21	0	271
House Sparrow	8	25	10	0	12	26	0	81
Species	121	127	80	148	105	89	130	207
Total individuals	4111	5162	1042	8289	3542	1505	7818	31,498

	Aike	Spar	Cher	Char	Gree	Lexi	Jasp	Total
Regular Count								
Hours foot	37.75	37	7.5		93.3	5	11.25	
Hours car	27.5	26	5.5		15.6	5	19.75	
Hours boat		2.5				0.5		
Hours canoe/kayak	2							
Hours bike		3	1.5					
Hours other	1							
Miles foot	21	30	5.5		35.6	8	5.5	
Miles car	217.5	480	109		365	96	116.5	
Miles boat		6				0.3		
Miles canoe/kayak	2							
Miles bike		10	5					
Miles other	5							
# Regular parties	12	21	2	10	9	7	4	
# Regular observers	20	29	4	35	30	9	20	
#Species	117	125	78	148	102	90	132	
#Individuals	3935	4642	1030	8289	3632	1505	7818	
Feeder Watch								
Hours Feeder Watch	4	21	3					
#Feeder Watchers	3	20	3					
#Feeder Stations	8	14	2					
#Species	15	39	11					
#Individuals	31	480	32					
Stationary								
Hours Stationary	4.25							
#Parties Stationary	3							
#Observers Stationary	5							
#Species	25							
#Individuals	74							
Nocturnal								
Hours Nocturnal	9	6	1		5			
Miles Nocturnal	38.5	44	5		9			
#parties nocturnal	5	4	1		4			
#observers nocturnal	6	5	2		5			
#Species	14	5	3		4			
#Individuals	71	40	10		13			
Time Start	415	700	800			630	605	
Time Stop	2000	2300	2200			2000	2029	
Temperature								
Pre-Dawn	70	68	75		57	53		
Dawn	70	67	69		59		70	
AM	74	69	75		66	60		
Noon	81	71	83		79	70	84	
PM	88	71	83		79	75	89	
Sunset	76	73	68		75.9	70		
Night	75	70	60		64.9			



	Aike	Spar	Cher	Char	Gree	Lexi	Jasp	Total
Wind					WSW			
Pre-Dawn	W 10	calm	SW 9		8.1			
	SW		WSW		SW		WSW	
Dawn	10	calm	11		6.9		8	
	SW		WSW		W			
AM	10	calm	7		3.5	13		
					W		W	
Noon	W 10	calm	W 11		12.7		10	
					W			
PM	W 10	W 4	W 9		9.2		W 12	
					NNE			
Sunset	W 10	calm	N 6		9.2			
Night	NW 5	calm	N 9		N 4.6			
% Clouds								
Pre-Dawn	100	100	20		0	3		
Dawn	50	100	20		0		75	
AM	20	100	20		0			
Noon	20	100	20		10	3	40	
PM	20	100	20		10		40	
Sunset	20	100	20		10	3		
Night					0			
Precipitation								
Pre-Dawn	0	0	0		0	0	0	
Dawn	0	0	0		0	0	0	
AM	0	0	0		0	0	0	
Noon	0	0	0		0	0	0	
		light						
PM	0	rain	0		0	0	0	
Sunset	0	0	0		0	0	0	
Night	0	0	0		0	0	0	

## General Field Notes

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*General Field Notes* briefly report such items as rare sightings, unusual behaviors, significant nesting records, or summaries of such items.

*First, second, or third sightings of species in either state must be submitted to the appropriate Bird Records Committee prior to publication in The Chat.*

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### First Record of Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*) for North Carolina

Harry E. LeGrand, Jr.<sup>1</sup> and Susan M. Campbell<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>NC Natural Heritage Program, 1601 MSC, Raleigh, NC 27699-1601

<sup>2</sup>NC Museum of Natural Sciences, 1626 MSC, Raleigh, NC 27699-1626

An unidentified hummingbird showed up in the yard of Mickey and Elayne Kodroff in Manteo, Dare County, NC, on 19 January 2003. Several wintering *Archilochus* hummingbirds, later identified as Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (*A. colubris*), were already present at the Kodroffs' hummingbird feeders. It was not until 11 March that a licensed hummingbird bander (author Susan Campbell) was able to visit the Kodroffs to capture, band, and identify the bird. Campbell's initial identification of Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*) was confirmed by Bob Sargent, a hummingbird bander from Alabama, through photographs of the hand-held bird. (Fig. 1)



Allen's Hummingbird, 11 March 2003, Manteo, NC. Photo by Susan Campbell.

Once word of the presence of an Allen's Hummingbird was announced to the general public by email on 17 March, several dozen birders were able to observe the bird, which was last seen by the Kodroffs on 29 March 2003. A few photographs of the bird coming to a feeder were also taken.

The Allen's Hummingbird was an immature male, in heavy molt when banded. When first seen in January, it had a pale rufous wash along the flanks, and the back was a dark green. One red feather was present on the left side of the gorget, which was otherwise whitish with numerous tiny dark spots. By 11 March, however, some new bright green feathers were appearing on the back, mixed with the older dark green feathers. On the very similar Rufous Hummingbird (*S. rufus*), new feathers on the back of an immature male should be reddish-brown instead of green. Also, the bird showed uniformly rounded tips on the newly emerged innermost two pairs of tail feathers (rectrices 5 and 6); a Rufous Hummingbird would have a clear notch on the inner web of the second pair of tail feathers (rectrix 5).

In its breeding season, the Allen's Hummingbird is restricted to the Pacific coast from southern Oregon to southern California. It is migratory over most of its range, with the more northerly breeding population (*S. s. sasin*) withdrawing to central Mexico for the winter (American Ornithologists' Union 1998). As with nearly all migratory hummingbirds, strays occur well away from the normal range. At the time of the North Carolina record, there had already been one record for the Virginia mountains in the winter of 1997–98 (Rottenborn and Brinkley 2007) and at least seven records from Georgia (Georgia Ornithological Society 2003). The first record for Allen's Hummingbird in South Carolina came from Lexington in January 2007 (Slyce et al. 2008).

This report of Allen's Hummingbird in Dare County was accepted by the NC Bird Records Committee (LeGrand et al. 2004). Because the photographs of the hand-held bird were considered to document this species, the species was added directly to the state's Official List.

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## First Record of Scott's Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*) for North Carolina

Dwayne Martin

Hickory, NC

On 29 Jan 2008, I received a call from Becky Duggan saying she had a yellow oriole coming to a feeder in her back yard in Conover, Catawba County, NC. I went to her house to watch for the oriole, and within 30 minutes, it showed up. I could tell right away that it was not a Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*). Using the Sibley Guide to Birds (Sibley 2000), I was able to identify it as an immature male Scott's Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*).

The individual had a black bib that extended about half way down the breast. It was bright yellow underneath, all the way from the bottom of the black bib to the undertail coverts. Its head was black, but the black ended at the neck. This characteristic identified it as an immature male because females lack black on the head. The rest of the back was grey with black specks. There was some yellow on the wings but not as much as would be on an adult male. The wings also had two white wing bars (Fig. 1).



Scott's Oriole, 29 Jan 2008, Conover, NC. Photo by Dwayne Martin.

I called Lori Owenby who came to the Duggans' house, saw the oriole, and agreed with my identification. I took several photos of the bird and sent them to Susan Campbell, Taylor Piephoff, and Ricky Davis to make sure our identification was correct. They all agreed that it was a Scott's Oriole. With the Duggans' permission, I sent out a message on the Carolinabirds listserve about the bird. Over the next ten days, about two hundred people from five

states came to the Duggan home to see the Scott's Oriole. It was last seen in a tree behind the Duggan home on 10 Feb 2008.

Scott's Oriole is a fairly common breeding bird of arid mountain slopes from central Texas, west to California, and north to Nevada and Utah. A neotropical migrant, Scott's Oriole generally vacates northern breeding areas and winters in Mexico south to Oaxaca, though overwintering birds are frequently found in California. (Dunne 2006).

Scott's Oriole has been previously recorded in the eastern United States during winter. Records exist for Kentucky (Palmer-Ball 2007), New York (Wilson et al. 2009), Pennsylvania (Johnson 2007), and Georgia (Boehm and Boehm 2002), so it may not be surprising that the species was observed in North Carolina. The species is not known to have occurred in states neighboring North Carolina, with the exception of Georgia.

This sighting was accepted to the Official List by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee as the first record of Scott's Oriole in the state (LeGrand et al. 2009) .

### Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Steven Shultz for providing the range information for Scott's Oriole.

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## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Spring 2010, unless otherwise noted)

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*Briefs for the Files* is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	December 1–February 28	due March 20
Spring	March 1–May 31	due June 20
Summer	June 1–July 31	due August 20
Fall	August 1–November 30	due December 20

Reports can be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you type them and list the sightings according to the birds in checklist order (not according to dates or locations). If you submit your report to me through e-mail, please type your report directly into the message or copy it from a word processing program directly into the message. You may also attach your file to the e-mail, but if you do, please let me know the program used and also send a second version saved as a text (.txt) file.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in *Carolinabirds*. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from *Carolinabirds*. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

**Corrigenda:** The Mottled Duck reported from Boiling Springs, NC, 23 Jan (Greg Massey, Harry Sell) was actually seen in Boiling Spring Lakes, Brunswick County, NC, The Short-eared Owl reported from Snow's Marsh along the Cape Fear River in New Hanover Co, NC, 2 Jan, was, in actuality, the same bird seen on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC, 3 Jan.



**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** Thought to be of wild origin were 12 at Donnelley Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Colleton Co, SC, 14 May (David Abbott). Of more suspect origin was a flock of 15 on a pond at the Beau Rivage Golf Resort, just N of Carolina Beach, NC, 28–29 May (*fide* Derb Carter).

**Ross's Goose:** The individual seen with a flock of Canada Geese in the vicinity of Surfside Beach, SC, during the fall and winter, was seen again 11 and 29 Mar (Jerry Kerschner) and apparently remained in the area into summer (*fide* Gary Phillips, Ritch Lilly). A summering Ross's Goose in the Carolinas is an unprecedented event!



Ross's Goose, 11 Mar 2010, Surfside Beach, SC. Photo by Jerry Kerschner.

**Gadwall:** Two in the Point Lake area off Albemarle Rd in Charlotte, NC, 28 Apr (Tom Sanders, Ron Clark) were somewhat late for that piedmont locality.

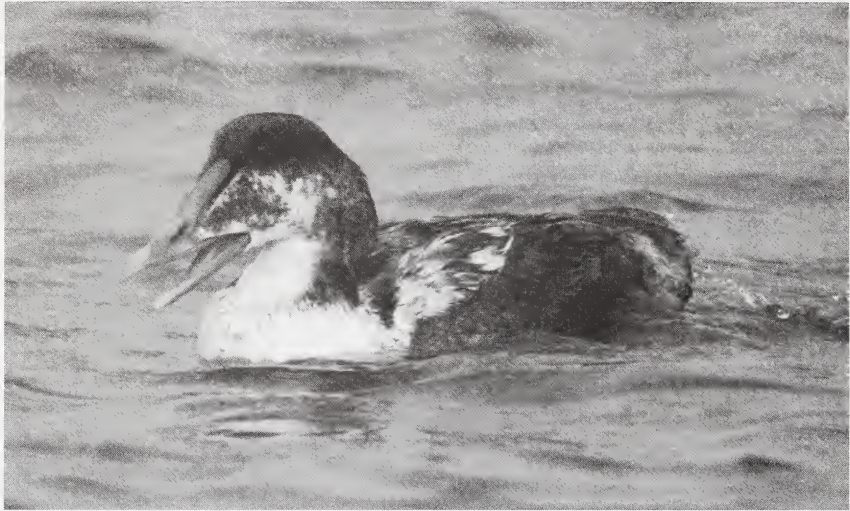
**Mottled Duck:** Four were seen “moving back and forth between the ponds near the aquarium and some dredge spoil areas” at Ft Fisher, NC, 6 May (Greg Massey). This sighting provides about the sixth record for the state. This species' range is expanding northward, and it probably won't be long before they are found on the central coast.

**“Common Teal”** : A male was seen in the entrance impoundment at Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), NC, 3 Mar (Ricky Davis). Davis speculates that this Eurasian form of Green-winged Teal is “most likely an annual wintering bird at this lake.”

**Ring-necked Duck:** A drake lingered on Salem Lake in Winston-Salem, NC, 6–10 May (John Haire).

**Lesser Scaup:** One seen at the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) off NC-191, Henderson Co, NC, 16 May (Wayne Forsythe, Simon Thompson) was quite late.

**Common Eider:** Two birds lingered throughout the period in NC—a juvenile (juv.) male at Oregon Inlet, NC (Jeff Lewis, Audrey Whitlock, John Haire, multiple observers (m. obs.)); and a female in the harbor of Beaufort, NC (John Fussell, Paula Gillikin). At the latter location, a juv. male was also seen, 18 Apr (Ron White, *fide* Fussell).



Common Eider, 5 May 2010, Pea Island NWR. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

**Harlequin Duck:** An adult male was photographed with a juv. male Common Eider off the Outer Banks Fishing Pier in Nags Head, NC, 11 Apr (Jeff Beane, Todd Pusser, et al.).

**Surf Scoter:** A female seen near the coquina rock outcrop at Ft Fisher, NC, 22 May (Ricky Davis) was somewhat late to depart our region. A few scoters tend to linger into late spring/early summer every year.

**Bufflehead:** A female lingered at the McAlpine WTP in Pineville, NC, until at least 28 Apr (Tom Sanders, Ron Clark).

**Common Goldeneye:** A female was photographed on the S end of Figure Eight Island, NC, 10 Mar (*fide* Angela Mangiameli).

**Hooded Merganser:** Suggestive of breeding in the area were sightings of females at Jackson Park in Hendersonville, NC, 12 May (Wayne Forsythe); and at Cowan's Ford WR, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 29 May (Jeff Lemons). More definitive evidence of breeding, i.e. sightings of females with chicks, was found on the Black River near Andrews, SC, 16 Apr (Stephen Berkowitz); on a small pond in Greensboro, NC, in May (Rob Rachlin); and on a pond in Jones Co, NC, where *two* broods were seen in May (Clancy Ballenger).

**Common Merganser:** Two seen off the Outer Banks Fishing Pier in Nags Head, NC, 11 Apr (Jeff Beane, Todd Pusser, et al.) were the only ones reported this spring.

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Fifty on Lake Hickory and Lookout Shoals Lake, part of the Catawba River, near Hickory, NC, 28 Mar (Monroe Pannell) provided a good count for a location so far inland.

**Common Loon:** An adult in breeding plumage on Beaver Lake in Asheville, NC, 22–28 May (Rob Biller, James Atkinson, m. obs.) was probably just passing through. An adult in breeding plumage around the dam at Falls Lake, NC, 7 May (Matt Daw, Ali Iyooob) may be the same bird that summered at this location last year. A bird in molt was seen in the lower lake at Durant Nature Park in N Raleigh, NC, 10 May (John Connors).

**Red-necked Grebe:** Two were seen from the ferry to Bald Head Island, NC, 2 Apr (Kyle Kittelberger).

**Western Grebe:** An individual was reported from the old lighthouse site in Buxton, NC, 9 Mar (*fide* Jeff Lewis), though never relocated.

**Fea's Petrel:** Only one was seen during the course of 19 nearly-consecutive pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, in late May and early June—a “very obliging” individual on 2 June (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Cory's Shearwater:** Eight were seen resting on the ocean about 200 yards off the hook of Cape Lookout, NC, 29 May (Wade Fuller). This species is rarely seen from land.

**Sooty Shearwater:** Numbers of this species were down in comparison to last spring's pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, with an average of only four seen per trip, compared to last spring's average of 26 per trip (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**European Storm-Petrel:** One was seen “very well” during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 31 May (Brian Patteson, et al.). This is the sixth year in a row that this species has been seen on a late May pelagic trip out of Hatteras.

**White-tailed Tropicbird:** Two were seen during the course of 19 nearly-consecutive pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, in late May and early June—individuals on 31 May and 2 June (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Red-billed Tropicbird:** One was seen this spring—an individual on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 1 June (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**American White Pelican:** Sightings of this species continue to increase in our region. Farthest inland were six, amongst cormorants, on High Rock Lake, near Salisbury, NC, 3 Mar (Jeff Lemons). Coastal high counts included 128 at North Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, 1 Mar (Chris Hill); 50 at Donnelley WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 6 Apr (Cherrie Sneed); and 35–40 seen on a dredge island just inside South Carolina, from Tybee Island, GA, 31 May (Jeff Sewell, *fide* Mark McShane). Up to 12 at a quarry pond in New Bern, NC, 6–25 Mar (Bob Holmes) were locally unusual.

**Anhinga:** Some of the farther inland sightings included three circling over McLaurin's Millpond in McColl, SC, 5 Apr (Mark Gretch); two at Falls Lake, NC, 13 Apr (Brian Bockhahn); and one at Morris Creek in S Franklin Co, NC, 14 Apr (Ricky Davis).

**Magnificent Frigatebird:** A juvenile was seen in flight over Lookout Bight at Cape Lookout, NC, 30 May (Ken Wilkins, Wade Fuller).



**American Bittern:** Inland sightings included individuals at Lake Conestee Nature Park in Greenville, SC, 29 Mar–11 Apr (Deanna Doggett, Paul Serridge, et al.); at Civitan Park in Winston-Salem, NC, 18 Apr (Jeremy Reiskind, *fide* Phil Dickinson); in the marsh on Plainfield Road in Greensboro, NC, 28 Apr (Henry Link); and, for the third year in a row, in the Butner Gamelands during the Durham Spring Bird Count (SBC), 25 Apr, (Norm Budnitz).

**“Great White” Heron:** One was seen with three Great Blue Herons along Mill Rd in Johnston Co, NC, 24 Apr (Eric Dean, Gene Howe). One could wonder how often this Great Egret look-alike is overlooked in our region.

**Little Blue Heron:** One, a first for the park, was seen at Lake Conestee Nature Park in Greenville, SC, 6 May (Chip Gilbert, *fide* Paul Serridge).

**Reddish Egret:** One seen on the flats behind the E end of Shackelford Banks, NC, 9–10 Mar (Jacob Socolar) was probably one of the two birds seen at nearby Cape Lookout in February.

**Cattle Egret:** Eighteen at a pond E of Scotland Neck, NC, 24 Apr (Ricky Davis) were locally unusual. A high count of 158 was made at Lock and Dam No. 1 along the Cape Fear River, SE corner of Bladen Co, NC, 14 May (Greg Massey).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Locally unusual was an adult in Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, 30 Apr (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** Three were seen at Hamilton Lakes in Greensboro, NC, 3 Apr (Lou Skrabec, Henry Link; see cover photo). This is the third year of nesting at this location. Single individuals were seen in Mecklenburg Co, NC, 18 Apr (Phil Fowler) and 24–28 Apr (Jeff Lemons, Ron Clark, Tom Sanders). One returned to Miller Park in Winston-Salem, NC, 19 Mar (Phil Dickinson). Five were found in a heronry off Garrett Rd in S Durham, NC, 1 May (Chuck Byrd, *fide* Will Cook).

**Roseate Spoonbill:** The first individual returned to the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 29 Apr, with a high count of 288 made 6 May (Steve Calver). A first-year individual was seen in a small pond on Ladys Island in Beaufort, SC, 18 May (Buddy Campbell).

**Swallow-tailed Kite:** This species sometimes overshoots its breeding ground and ends up along the NC coast during spring migration. At least two, and possibly as many as five, were reported by multiple observers near Kill Devil Hills, NC, 15–25 Mar (Russ Lay, Jeff Lewis, et al.). Individuals were seen in flight over a yard in Wilmington, NC, 27 Mar (Amy Williamson); and over Frisco, NC, 22 Apr (Brian Patteson). One seen in flight from the I-95 bridge over the Cape Fear River in Fayetteville, NC, 24 April (Bob Holmes) may indicate a possible nest site in that area.

**Mississippi Kite:** One seen in flight over New Bern, NC, 3 Mar (Bob Holmes) was somewhat early. In the western part of our region, individuals were seen in flight over Clyde, NC, 15 May (Paul Super) and near Providence Springs Elementary School in Charlotte, NC, 4 May (Tom Sanders, Ron Clark, Taylor Piephoff, Rob Van Epps).

**Northern Harrier:** One seen during a Carolina Bird Club (CBC) field trip to New River State Park (SP), Ashe Co, NC, 2 May (Phil Dickinson, et al.) was somewhat late.

**Broad-winged Hawk:** One or two returned to Mill Creek area of Carteret Co, NC, where this species has “apparently been nesting for several years now”, in May (Jack Fennell, *fide* John Fussell). A “dark-morph” variant was seen perched on a telephone pole, and in flight, along NC-226 in Spruce Pine, NC, 17 May (Eric & Michelle Scholz). This rare western morph has not previously been documented in our region.

**Golden Eagle:** One was seen at Santee Coastal Reserve, SC, 1 Mar (Joan & Les Carr).

**Merlin:** One seen during a CBC field trip to Reynolda Park in Winston-Salem, NC, 1 May (Tom & Tammy Sanders, et al.) was a good find for such an inland site.

**Peregrine Falcon:** Two nest sites were newly discovered in the NC mountains this spring. Pairs were first seen on territory at Victory Wall in Haywood Co, NC, 5 Apr, and at Pickens Nose in Macon Co, NC, 12 Apr (Chris Kelly). Both nesting attempts were reportedly successful.

**King Rail:** As many as six were heard in the White Oak Creek arm of Jordan Lake, NC, during the SBC, 2 May (Ginger Travis, Marty McClelland, *fide* Norm Budnitz).

**Virginia Rail:** One was heard and seen briefly in the marsh at Tanglewood Park, near Winston-Salem, NC, 1 and 4 Mar (John Haire, Royce Hough). Considering the early date of the sighting, one could speculate that this bird had spent all winter in the area.

**Purple Gallinule:** A good count of “at least 25” was made at Savannah NWR, SC, 13 May (Keith McCullough).

**Sandhill Crane:** One was seen in the area of White House Rd and Beckham Swamp Rd in Richland Co, SC, 3–31 May (John Grego, Sparkle Clark, et al.). An adult was seen near Swansboro, NC, 3–8 Apr (Richard Phelps, Louis Shackleton).

**American Golden-Plover:** Somewhat early were two at Hooper Lane in Henderson Co, NC, 11 Mar, and a high count of seven at the same location 14 Mar (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey). Two sightings were made at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 14 and 21 Apr (Steve Calver, Ellie Covington).

**Snowy Plover:** One was seen on Bear Island, Hammocks Beach SP, NC, during the Onslow County SBC, 24 Apr (John Fussell, Barbara Gould). Could this bird be the same individual that visited the island in July–Sept 2008?

**American Oystercatcher:** Five nest sites, including one harboring eggs, were noted on gravel rooftops in Morehead City and Atlantic Beach, NC, this spring (John Fussell).

**Black-necked Stilt:** Rare away from the coast, wayward migrants were found at two inland sites in NC this spring. Four were found at Archie Elledge WTP in Winston-Salem, NC, 28 May, with one bird lingering until 3

June (Doug Hochmuth, John Haire). This sighting provides the third state record of this species outside of the coastal plain. One seen in flight over the S end of Falls Lake, Wake Co, NC, 28 May (Ali Iyoob) was a first for the lake. Some of the better coastal counts included 36 at Santee Coastal Reserve, Charleston Co, SC, 20 Mar (Ritch Lilly); about 60 at Bear Island WMA, SC, 21 Mar and later (David Abbott, m. obs.); and 226 at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 26 May (Steve Calver). The latter report was the spring's high count for our region, though it was low in comparison to past spring counts at that site.

**Solitary Sandpiper:** 35+ in the French Broad River Valley of Henderson Co, NC, 27 Apr (Wayne Forsythe, Bob Olthoff) was an unusually high number for a mountain locality.

**Marbled Godwit:** Notable counts included 41 on the flats behind the E end of Shackleford Banks, NC, 10 Mar (Jacob Socolar); and 30+ at Pea Island NWR, NC, 5–6 Mar (Greg Massey, Harry Sell, Ricky Davis, et al.).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** One found at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 6 Mar

(Elisa Enders) was somewhat early. One seen at Wallace Farms in Charlotte, NC 9 Apr (Jeff Lemons) was a good find for an inland site in spring.

**Ruff:** Two females (Reeves) were seen in South Carolina this spring—one at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 20 Mar and 6 Apr (Cherrie Sneed, m. obs.); and one at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 21 and 29 Apr (Steve Calver, Ellie Covington).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** One in the French Broad River Valley of Henderson Co, NC, 2 Apr (Wayne Forsythe) was unusual for the mountain locality.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** This migrant, which is harder to find in spring than in fall, was seen twice in our region this spring. One was photographed in the French Broad River Valley of Henderson Co, NC, 26 Apr (Wayne Forsythe) and the other was seen at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 29 Apr (Steve Calver).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** Five, three females and two males, in breeding plumage, were seen at the Archie Elledge WTP in Winston-Salem, NC, 18–19 May (Carol Cunningham, Phil Dickinson, Ron Underwood). One was seen at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 26 May (Steve Calver). A



Black-necked Stilt, 28 May 2010, Archie Elledge WTP, Winston-Salem, NC. Photo by Phil Fowler.



total of 189 were seen during the course of 19 nearly-consecutive pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, in late May and early June (Brian Patteson).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** Nine in a field with Ring-billed Gulls, just E of Rocky Mount, NC, 29 Mar (Ricky Davis) were very unusual. Typically this species is only found along the coast and, inland, over large lakes.

**Black-headed Gull:** The individual seen sporadically throughout the winter along the causeway over Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, was seen again, 6 Mar (Peggy Eubank).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** A count of 41, amidst a flock of 42 gulls, on the beach of Southern Shores, NC, in early April (Jeff Lewis) indicates how common this species is becoming along the Outer Banks.

**Glaucous Gull:** One was reported from Oregon Inlet, NC, 1 Mar (Peggy Eubank). A juvenile in flight over the salt marshes/mudflats near New Topsail Inlet, Pender Co, NC, 20 May (Gilbert Grant) was quite late.

**Sooty Tern:** One was seen on a sandbar in the Stono Inlet, between Folly Beach and Kiawah Island, SC, 16 May (Steve Compton).

**Bridled Tern:** Nine were seen during the course of 19 pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, in late May and early June (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Caspian Tern:** Migrants seen over inland lakes included two over Blewett Falls Lake, Anson Co, NC, 18 Apr (Mark Gretch); three over Falls Lake, near Creedmoor, NC, 27 Apr (Josh Southern); and eight over Salem Lake in Winston-Salem, NC, 11 May (John Haire).

**Black Tern:** Thirteen were counted at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 26 May (Steve Calver). In our region, this species is much more likely to be seen during fall migration than during spring.



Pomarine Jaeger, 22 May 2010, off Hatteras, NC. Photo by Nathan Swick.

**Arctic Tern:** One was seen and photographed on the jetty at Fort Macon SP, Atlantic Beach, NC, 27–28 May (Al Gamache, Randy Newman, John Fussell, Harry Sell, et al.) providing a rare “from land” sighting for our region. The one-day high count out of Hatteras, NC, was 17–20 on 28 May (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**South Polar Skua:** Only one was seen during the course of 19 nearly-consecutive pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, in late May and early June (Brian Patteson, et al.)—quite a poor showing compared to last year’s count of 47.

**Jaegers:** Numbers on spring pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, were quite low compared to the past few years, with 13 Pomarines (last year: 63), 7 Parasitics (last year: 18), and 13 Long-taileds (last year: 33), in late May and early June (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Razorbill:** A dead juvenile was found at the S end of Topsail Beach, Pender Co, NC, 6 Apr (Gilbert Grant).

**Atlantic Puffin:** Two juvenile, or non-breeding plumaged, birds were photographed from shore, near the rock jetty at Cape Lookout, NC, 9 Mar (Keith Rittmaster, *fide* John Fussell). Though this species is sometimes found on winter pelagic trips off Cape Hatteras, these puffins were found at a more southern location than usual, and were also the first to be photographed from shore.



Atlantic Puffins, 9 Mar 2010, Cape Lookout, NC. Photo by Keith Rittmaster.

**White-winged Dove:** One at a feeder in Morehead City, NC, 29–30 May (Duffy Wade, *fide* John Fussell) was the only one reported this spring.

**Exotic Psittacids:** Though almost certainly escaped captives, a few parrots were seen in our region this spring—a Black-hooded Parakeet continued to roost in a utility pole in Morehead City, NC, throughout the period (John Fussell); a yellow parakeet was seen at Lake Conestee Nature Park in Greenville, SC, 18 May (Paul Serridge); and a Peach-faced Lovebird visited a feeder in New Bern, NC, 31 May and later (Bob Holmes).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** Two migrants were found passing through Winston-Salem, NC—one at Tanglewood Park, 8 May (Bill Gifford, *fide* John Haire); and another at Reynolda Gardens, 12 May (Jim Martin, *fide* Haire). One was seen at Catfish Lake in the Croatan National Forest (NF), 20 May, and two were seen together near Catfish Lake, 22 May (John Fussell). Finding this species in the Croatan NF in late May is “an apparently somewhat regular phenomenon” and Fussell wonders if it may breed there.

**Barn Owl:** One seen near the E/NE corner of the hiking trail at Santee Coastal Reserve, Charleston Co, SC, 20 Mar (Ritch Lilly) and one photographed the same day at Santee Delta WMA, SC (Cathy Miller) were the only Barn Owls mentioned this spring.



Barn Owl, 20 Mar 2010, Santee Delta WMA, SC. Photo by Cathy Miller.

**Barred Owl:** One at Jackson Park in Hendersonville, NC, 14 May (Wayne Forsythe) was the observer's first in 24 years of birding in the park.

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** Along the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) near Devil's Courthouse, NC, two were heard 10 Apr (Marilyn Westphal, Mark Simpson); up to four were heard in late April (Westphal, Simpson); and “two to three” were heard 18 May (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey).

**Eastern Whip-poor-will:** One heard in Aiken, SC, 27 Mar (Matt Malin) was the first one reported this spring.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** One at Alligator River NWR, NC, 30 Apr (Jeff Lewis) was quite late.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** This species was reported from the S end of Falls Lake, Raleigh, NC, 20 May (Kyle Kittelberger) and 29 May (Ali Iyob).

**Alder Flycatcher:** A record 36 birds were counted on the Balsam Mountains SBC, 15 May (*fide* Marilyn Westphal). These birds were found in the



Shining Rock Wilderness and Black Balsam area, Pisgah NF, Haywood Co, NC.

**Willow Flycatcher:** 2 Willow Flycatchers were found at Concord Mills Wetland, 29 May (Jeff Lemons). One was heard calling in the wetland on Ballinger Rd near the Leonard Center, east of the airport in Greensboro, NC, 14 May (Henry Link).

**Least Flycatcher:** One was seen and heard at Evergreen Nature Preserve in Charlotte, NC, 11 May (Tom Sanders).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** Two were reported this spring, though neither bird was seen more than once. One was seen flycatching in a cattle pasture along Cane Creek Rd, SW Union Co, "about half a mile north of the SC line" 7 Apr (Bruce Sorrie, *fide* Harry LeGrand). The other one was seen perched on a wire along NC-11, about a mile N of US-64, in E Edgecombe Co, 28 May (Paula Wright, *fide* Ricky Davis).

**Warbling Vireo:** One was seen and heard in a cottonwood tree along Lookout Shoals Lake, Catawba Co, NC, 4–15 May, and two more were found at different locations along the lake, 16 May (Monroe Pannell, Dwayne Martin). One was seen at Anilorac Farm, a documented nesting site just NW of Chapel Hill, NC, 22 May (Derb Carter).



Common Raven nest, 1 Apr 2010, Charlotte, NC. Nestlings are visible in the nest; an adult is flying from the nest and casting a shadow. Photo by Jeff Lemons.

**Common Raven:** Nesting was confirmed at the Vulcan Rock Quarry in Charlotte, NC, when a pair of adults was photographed tending to nestlings, 31 Mar (David Wright, Marcia Wright, Tom Sanders, Jeff Lemons, Ron Clark). This sighting provides the first documented record of ravens nesting

in Mecklenburg County, which, interestingly, had its first confirmed raven sighting only two years ago.

**Horned Lark:** Nesting was suspected at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, with a pair frequenting the same area throughout the spring, and two juveniles seen there 23 May (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, John Voigt). One seen along Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 14 Mar (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey) was locally unusual.

**Tree Swallow:** An amazing one-day count of 100,000 birds was made at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 1 Apr (Steve Calver).

**Cliff Swallow:** Reports of nesting colonies included 300+ at the old Springs Riverland Distribution Center in Lancaster, SC, 15 Apr (Jeff Lemons); 166 nests on the face of the power plant on Blewett Falls Lake, Anson Co, NC, 25 Apr (Mark Gretch); and 40+ nests at the US-70 bridge over Slocum Creek in Havelock, NC, in May (John Fussell).

**Brown-headed Nuthatch:** Not very common at higher elevations, one was observed at Sandy Mush Game Land, Buncombe Co, NC, 5 and 23 May (Chris Kelly).

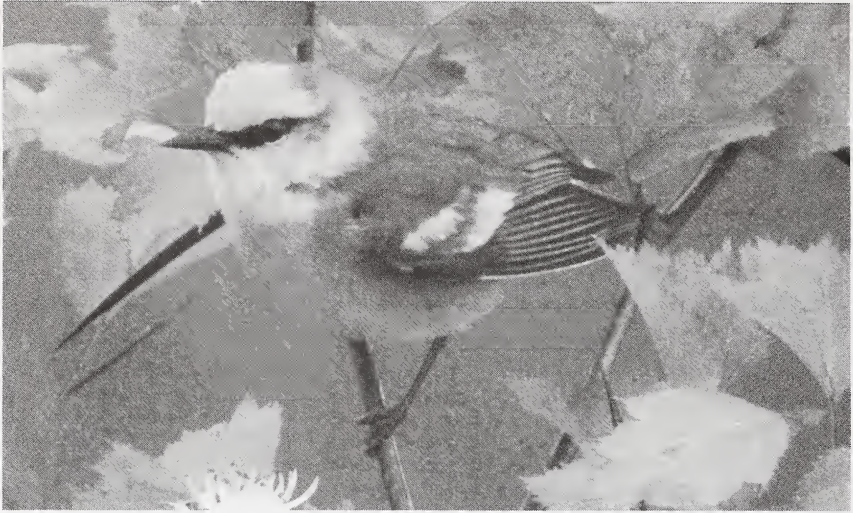
**Marsh Wren:** One at Tanglewood Park in Winston-Salem, NC, 1–8 Mar was locally unusual (John Haire).



Marsh Wren, 1 Mar 2010, Winston-Salem, NC. Photo by John Haire.

**Blue-winged Warbler:** A good count of three was had at the Sandy Mush Game Land, Buncombe Co, NC, 30 May (Doug Johnston, et al., *fide* Chris Kelly). Three were seen on the Falls Lake, NC, SBC, 27 Apr (*fide* Brian Bockhahn) and were a first for that count.

**“Brewster’s Warbler”** : One was photographed, along with a Golden-winged Warbler, in Cove Creek, NC, 8 May (Jeff Lemons).



"Brewster's" Warbler, 8 May 2010, Cove Creek, NC. Photo by Jeff Lemons

**Nashville Warbler:** One photographed at Edisto Beach SP, SC, 8 Mar (Rob Biller) must have been a wintering bird, as it was too early to have been a returning spring migrant. Rare along the coast during spring migration, one Nashville Warbler was seen in the Elizabethan Gardens on Roanoke Island, NC, 19–23 Apr (Jeff Lewis).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** Another warbler that is rare along the coast in spring, two Chestnut-sided Warblers were seen at Donnelley WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 14 May (David Abbott).

**"Audubon's Warbler"** : A male in breeding plumage was well-observed as it foraged in the treetops with a flock of "Myrtle" Yellow-rumped Warblers in the Trappers Runs subdivision of Cary, NC, 24 Apr (Kevin Markham).

**Blackpoll Warbler:** One found at Lake Norman SP, NC, 4 Apr (Tomm Lorenzin) was quite early for a species with a reputation for being one of the last spring migrants.

**Cerulean Warbler:** Away from the mountains, sightings included a singing male on private property in southern Granville Co, NC, 24 Apr (Deck Stapleton) and an individual at Hamilton Lakes Park in Greensboro, NC, 29 Apr (Henry Link).

**American Redstart:** One seen on the High Windy Trail in Black Mountain, NC, 3 Apr (Stu Gibeau) was somewhat early.

**Swainson's Warbler:** One at Lake Conestee Nature Park in Greenville, SC, 6 May (Jane Kramer, *fide* Paul Serridge) was a first for the park.

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** One at Mason Farm in Chapel Hill, NC, 23 Mar (Thierry Besancon) was a somewhat early spring arrival.

**Kentucky Warbler:** One seen along the Blue Wall Passage of the Palmetto Trail, near Tryon, SC, during the Greenville Co SBC, 17 Apr (*fide* Steve Compton) was the first one reported this spring.



**Connecticut Warbler:** One, singing, was well-seen on private property just S of Old Fort, NC, 11 May (Tom Pericak, Bonnie Simmons). Two (!) were seen and heard at Jackson Park in Hendersonville, NC, 13 May (Ron Selvey, *fide* Wayne Forsythe).

**Wilson's Warbler:** One, a first for the park, was seen at Lake Conestee Nature Park in Greenville, SC, 4–5 May (Chip Gilbert, Simon Harvey, *fide* Paul Serridge).

**Canada Warbler:** One seen in a yard in Manteo, NC, 19 May was locally very unusual (Jeff Lewis).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** The bird that wintered in a yard in Morehead City, NC, remained until at least 9 Apr (John Fussell).

**Vesper Sparrow:** One photographed at the dam on Falls Lake, Raleigh, NC, 1 Apr (Matt Daw, Ali Iyoob) was a good find. Another was seen along the Muddy Creek Greenway in Winston-Salem, NC, 1 Apr (Phil Dickinson, John Haire, Carol Cunningham).

**Lark Sparrow:** Two seen in a yard just S of Myrtle Beach, SC, 3–4 Apr (Ritch Lilly) were the only ones reported this spring.

**Savannah Sparrow:** One seen on Hooper Bald, Graham Co, NC, at 5380 ft, 10 May (Chris Kelly) may indicate attempted breeding at that site.

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** An individual was seen at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 1 and 21 Apr (Steve Calver).

**Harris's Sparrow:** One was photographed at a feeder in Kill Devil Hills, NC, 22 Apr (Jeff Lewis) where it had reportedly been visiting for several days. Later attempts to relocate the bird were unsuccessful.



Harris's Sparrow, 22 Apr 2010, Kill Devil Hills, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

**White-crowned Sparrow:** Up to six visited a feeder in Lenoir, NC, throughout the winter, until last seen 5 May (Walt Kent).

**Western Tanager:** An individual visited a feeder in Morehead City, NC, where it was photographed and seen by many, 6–31 Mar (Andy Haines, John Fussell, m. obs.).

**Dickcissel:** Individuals were seen at Sunset Beach, NC, 3 Apr (Tom Sanders, et al.); at Santee Coastal Reserve, Charleston Co, SC, 24 Apr (Michael Bernard); in Eutaw Springs, SC, 30 Apr (Stephen Thomas); on Roanoke Island, NC, 19 May (Jeff Lewis); and Townville, SC, 21 May (Steve Kilpatrick). A high count of 12, 11 singing males and one female, was made at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 23 May (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, John Voigt).



Dickcissel, 21 May 2010, Townville, SC. Photo by Steve Kilpatrick.

**Bobolink:** Some of the larger flocks reported were 50 at Wallace Farms in Charlotte, NC, 25 Apr (Jeff Lemons); 40 at Savannah NWR, SC, 13 May (Keith McCullough); and 50+ on Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 16 May (Wayne Forsythe, Jon Smith).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** A first-winter male was photographed and seen by many when it visited a feeder in Castle Hayne, New Hanover Co, NC, 28 Feb–23 March (Jennifer Lee, Mark Jones, Bruce Smithson, Greg Massey, m. obs.).

**Rusty Blackbird:** Ten found in a swampy area off NC-54, during the Chapel Hill NC SBC, 1 May (Chuck Byrd, *fide* Will Cook) were somewhat late.

**Purple Finch:** This species put on a poor showing in our region this past winter. Three females/juveniles were seen at a feeder in a yard near Mill Creek, NC, 13 Mar (Jack Fennell). A female was seen at a feeder at Lake Conestee Nature Park in Greenville, SC, 9–11 Apr (Paul Serridge). An adult male at Reynolda Gardens in Winston-Salem, NC, 27–28 Apr (John Haire) was late.

# CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

[www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org)

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

Membership is open to all persons interested in the conservation, natural history, and study of wildlife with particular emphasis on birds. Dues, contributions, and bequests to the Club may be deductible from state and federal income and estate taxes. Make checks payable to Carolina Bird Club, Inc. Send checks or correspondence regarding membership or change of address to the Headquarters Secretary. Dues include \$6 for a subscription to the *CBC Newsletter* and \$7 for a subscription to *The Chat*. Associate members do not receive a separate subscription to publications.

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Individual or non-profit.....	\$25.00
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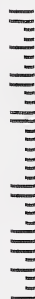


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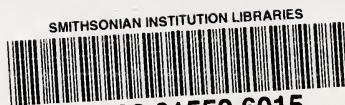
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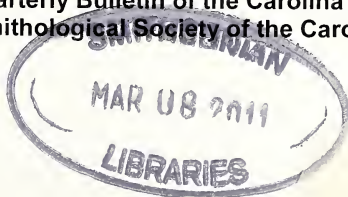
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# THE CHAT

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# Occurrence of the White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) in South Carolina and Neighboring Regions, and its Relation to the Florida Population

William Post

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In South Carolina, the White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) is a rare transient on the immediate coast (40 reports), and a very rare transient in the interior (four reports from the coastal plain outside the tidal zone, and one within the Blue Ridge province). This dove was unknown in the state before 1965. The purpose of this note is to review the occurrence of the White-winged Dove in South Carolina and nearby regions, and to discuss how its pattern of occurrence may be related to growth of the Florida population.

This dove was first recorded in South Carolina on 6 December 1965 when W. D. Bootle shot a male while hunting on James Island, Charleston County (Chamberlain 1966). G. B. Saunders identified the specimen as *Z. a. asiatica*, the subspecies breeding as far east as southern Texas. The next White-winged Dove was also shot during a hunt, on Wadmalaw Island, 1 January 1968 (specimen photographed, carcass not preserved). There was not another verified report until 1990, but through 2009, 45 state reports have accumulated (Fig. 1), including six specimens and seven photographs (Table 1). From 1989 to 2009, this dove was recorded every year but three (1997, 2001 and 2007).

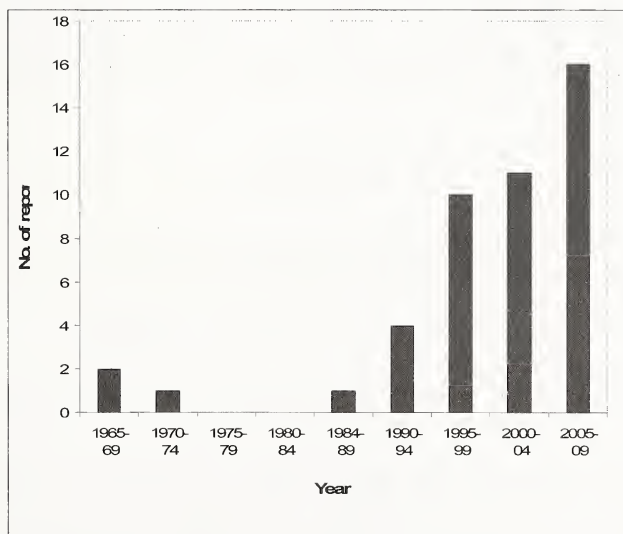


Figure 1. Number of reports of White-winged Doves in SC, 1965–2009, by 5-year intervals.

Table 1. Verifiable records of White-winged Dove in SC. South Carolina Bird Records Committee: SCBRC.

Location	Date	Document- ation	Observer	Reference	Comments
James Island	6 Dec 1965	Specimen	W. D. Bootle	Burton 1969; Chat 30:52,	Male; 1st state record; during dove hunt
Wadmalaw Island	"December" 1968	Photograph	Farley Smith, Jr.	Burton 1969	male; during dove hunt
Charleston	11–13 Nov 1990	Photograph	S. Compton	Chat 55:93– 101	
Sullivan's island	15 Nov 1993	Specimen	W. Post	this paper	male; at feeder
S. Aiken Co	15 Apr 1994	Photograph	K. A. Buhlmann <i>et</i> <i>al.</i>	Buhlmann <i>et</i> <i>al.</i> 1995; SCBRC 04- 94-1	at feeder; first inland record
Johns Island	30 Dec 1995	Specimen	W. Gibbs	this paper	female, during dove hunt
Harbor Island	28 Jun–10 Jul 1996	Photograph	J. Halleron	Chat 66:153; SCBRC 04- 96.2	at feeder, remained 13 days
Sullivan's Island	18 Nov 2000	Specimen	W. Post	this paper	at feeder, with collared- doves
Sullivan's Island	1 Dec 2000	Specimen	W. Post	this paper	male; at feeder
Sullivan's Island	30 Nov 2002	Specimen	W. Post	this paper	female; at feeder with collared- doves
Huntington Beach	27 Jul 2005	Photograph	P. Turner	this paper	
Garden City Beach	30 Dec 2008	Photograph	D. Forsythe	this paper	
James Island	6 Apr 2009	Photograph	B. McCord	Chat 73: 105– 106	
James Island	29 Nov 2009	Photograph	N. Dias	NAB 64:61	at feeder

Most (40 of 45) of the South Carolina reports are from the immediate coast, and 63% of the coastal reports were in November–February. White-winged Dove has been found on the coast in every month except August (Fig. 2). In contrast, most interior sightings (four of seven) were in April. The dove was first recorded in the interior on 15 April 1994, when one was photographed in southern Aiken County within the Savannah River Site (Buhlmann *et al.* 1995). The earliest fall appearance in the interior was at Columbia, on 16 September 2006 (C. Eastman. Chat 71:22, 2007). In addition to this sighting, it was seen in Columbia on 20 December 1998. A sighting from Columbia on 6 June 1989 was not verified; it was reported to involve six birds, an unusually high count, and possibly entailed Eurasian Collared-Doves (*Streptopelia decaocto*).

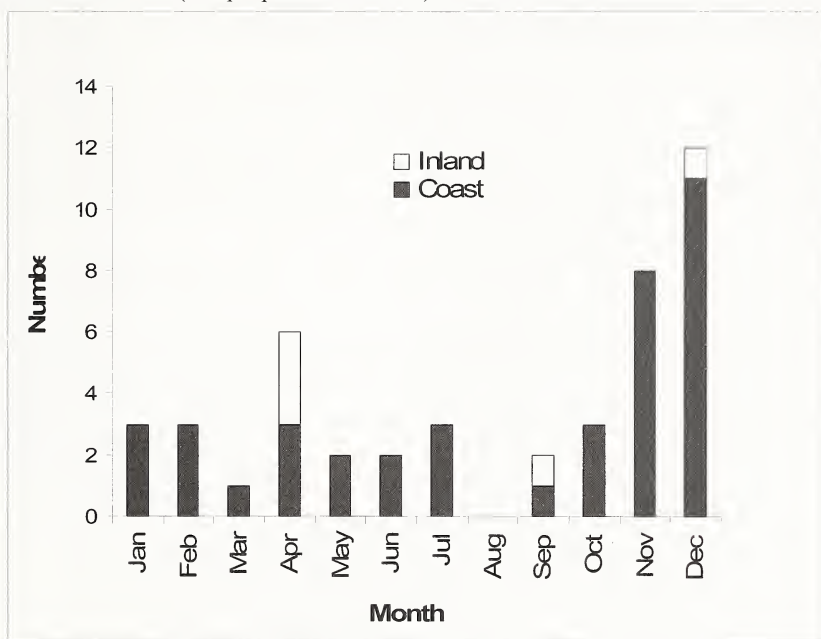


Figure 2. Seasonal and regional distribution of White-winged Doves in South Carolina. Coast refers to outer coastal plain (tidal zone).

Since the late 1990s, this species has often been seen at bird feeders (>20 reports). By 1995, White-winged Doves were seen associating with Eurasian Collared-Doves. One stayed with a flock of collared-doves “several months” in fall 1996 at Bennett’s Point, Colleton County (G. Beaton and B. Wood). A male collected 30 November 2002 on Sullivan’s Island was at a feeder with a flock of 35 collared-doves (Table 1). Most (25 of 31) doves have been reported lingering two days or less. Others have remained at one site for extended periods (14–60 days). Two is the largest number confirmed at one site (31 Dec 2005, Charleston; 23 November 2000, Edisto Island). The



White-winged Dove has been seen most often at feeding stations on James Island (nine reports) and on Sullivan's Island (four).

Based on 50 reports, the occurrence pattern in North Carolina mirrors that of South Carolina: 80% of NC doves were seen on the immediate coast, and 40% of sightings have been in November–December. North Carolina, unlike SC, has reports from the piedmont (five), but none from the mountains. A pair producing two young in June–July 1998 in Beaufort, NC, was thought to have been locally released, as one bird was banded (presumably a non-government band; F. A. Enders *in* Davis 1998. Chat 63:40).

Chandler and Lewis (2001) listed 25 reports from Georgia through 2001, all but three occurring since 1972. As in the Carolinas, a high proportion of sightings (13 of 22) have been from the immediate coast. Unlike SC, a relatively large number of Georgia reports (10 of 22) were from the interior coastal plain, primarily in the spring (eight of 14 spring reports). None was reported from the piedmont or mountains. It has not been determined whether birds seen in Georgia originated from Florida, or from the SW North American population, but Chandler and Lewis (2001) suggest that birds seen in the spring and early summer are from western North America, while birds occurring in the winter originate in Florida.

Until the 1960s, White-winged Doves were a rare, regular transient in Florida, believed to have originated in the western Gulf coast (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). G. B. Saunders (*in litt.*, Charleston Museum) believed that during the 1960's, birds breeding in southern Texas regularly wandered along the Gulf coast as far east as Florida, and some turned northward rather than southward along the west coast of Florida. This hypothesis may apply to the two collected in South Carolina in 1965 and 1968, and perhaps to the two Georgia specimens, collected in 1959 and 1962 (Chandler and Lewis 2001).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the White-winged Dove population in Florida grew rapidly, primarily as a result of introductions (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992, Stevenson and Anderson 1994). In 1959, ten pairs were released near Homestead, Dade Co. The species began breeding there (Fisk 1968), and eight years later the population was estimated to contain 200 birds (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). In the late 1970s, the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission began capturing birds from southern Florida, introducing them to central Florida, as far north as Alachua Co (L. E. Williams *in* Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). In April–July 2002, twenty-two were counted at four locations in Columbia County, Florida, on the border of southeastern Georgia (Florida Field Naturalist 31:14, 2003). Such large numbers near Georgia suggest that the doves recorded there and in the Carolinas since the 1980s originated in Florida. In addition, as these doves have appeared in northern Florida in spring and summer, it is more likely that those sighted in the Carolinas and Georgia during that period are from also Florida, rather than southwestern North America, as suggested by Chandler and Lewis (2001).

In summary, South Carolina now has 48 reports of White-winged Doves (41 from the coast; seven from the interior). This includes six verifiable by specimens, and eight verified by photographs. On the outer coastal plain, the species occurs mainly in late fall–winter (November to February; 26 of 40 reports). Inland birds have tended to occur in April (three of six reports). It is likely that the increase in reports from the Carolinas and Georgia since the 1990s is associated with the rapid growth of the Florida population, and in the future the species should be recorded with greater frequency in the Southeast.

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## General Field Notes

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*General Field Notes* briefly report such items as rare sightings, unusual behaviors, significant nesting records, or summaries of such items.

First, second, or third sightings of species in either state must be submitted to the appropriate Bird Records Committee prior to publication in *The Chat*.

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### First Record of California Gull (*Larus californicus*) for South Carolina

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On 5 January 2010 I visited the Horry County landfill, off Route 90, east of Conway, South Carolina. While looking through a group of Ring-billed (*Larus delawarensis*), Laughing (*L. atricilla*), and Herring (*L. argentatus*) Gulls, I noticed a gull, larger than the Ring-billed Gulls around it, but smaller than a Herring Gull. I also noted a red and black spot on its long bill, its gray-green legs, and dark eyes. The wings were relatively long, pointed, and with a "tail-dragging" aspect. Its mantle was darker than those of nearby Ring-bills. These characteristics led me to conclude that I was looking at a California Gull (*Larus californicus*). Other diagnostic characteristics were: 1) tertial and scapular crescents more conspicuous than those of nearby Ring-bills; 2) a reddish orbital ring; 3) head mottling similar in extent, but browner and softer than the crisp gray markings of nearby Ring-bills.

I observed the bird through 8x binoculars and a 20x spotting scope from a distance of 10–15 m. I obtained photographs with a Canon G10 digital camera (Fig. 1). On a subsequent visit, Lex Glover and I noted and photographed the conspicuously large subapical white spots on its black primaries, features indicating it was an adult.

The variability of large gulls is almost limitless, and the possibility of hybridization cannot be discounted; however, this individual displayed a wide range of traits, enumerated above, which are consistent with its identification as a California Gull. The landfill, near the northeastern corner of SC, may attract as many as 20,000 gulls, including rarer birds such as Iceland (*Larus glaucoides*) and Glaucous (*L. hyperboreus*) Gulls. The landfill is a logical place for a California Gull to appear.

The present report was reviewed by the SC Bird Records Committee (report # 01-10-01) and accepted as valid (D. Slyce, pers. comm.). With the verification of this record, 14 species of gulls have been documented for



South Carolina. Another California Gull for the state was reported from the Jasper County landfill in January 2004. Three separate reports of the occurrence were submitted to the South Carolina Bird Records Committee (Reports 01-04-01a-c; Slyce et al. 2005); no decision regarding these submissions has been made.

Georgia has two accepted records of the California Gull, a sight record made in February 2006, and a photograph obtained in January 2007 (G. Beaton, Jr., pers. comm.). North Carolina's first California Gull was documented in 1993 (Dinsmore et al. 1995); since then, one or two individuals have been seen on the coast each winter. Other rare species such as Thayer's (*L. thayeri*) and Slaty-backed Gulls (*L. schistisagus*) have been recorded in North Carolina and may occur in South Carolina in the future.



Figure 1. California Gull with Ring-billed and Laughing Gulls 5 January 2010, Conway, SC. Photo by Chris Hill.

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## Nesting Scissor-tailed Flycatchers (*Tyrannus forficatus*) in Greenville County, SC

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The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) was originally classified as an accidental visitor in South Carolina (Sprunt and Chamberlain 1949, Burton 1970), with about ten reports through 1979. Since 1980 there have been at least 40 reports (McNair and Post 1993, Redshank Software 2005), most of which occurred during May–July. By 2004, three nesting attempts had been documented. The first of these occurred in July 1982, in Youngs Community in upper Laurens County. One young fledged (Mancke 1982). A pair nested in the same area in 1983 (LeGrand 1984), but the outcome was not reported (McNair and Post 1993). A family group of five was reported by Robin Carter et al. in Edgefield County, west of Saluda, in July 2004. This flock consisted of several young that probably had fledged nearby (Davis 2004), although the specific locality was not determined. The present report documents the third and fourth successful nestings in South Carolina, and the first instance of a pair's raising two broods in one breeding season in South Carolina.

On 5 June 2010, while visiting the Kellet farm on Gunter Road, near Piedmont (Greenville County), South Carolina, Lorraine Brown saw two Scissor-tailed Flycatchers. On 14 June she informed members of the Greenville County Bird Club of her find, and many were able to observe the birds over the next few weeks. Mr. Kellet, the farm's owner, called the birds "Split-tailed Fence-sitters", and said that they had been visiting his farm for the past few years. He also said that he had observed as many as ten, although details of this observation are not available.

Gunter Road is a typical rural road of the South Carolina piedmont. There is a cattle farm on its east side, with pasture, scattered trees, a barn and outbuildings, and a small pond. The west side is bordered by a tree farm. The area is similar to the habitats of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in the western part of their range (Regosin 1998).

On 16 June, Chip and Sara Gilbert observed three young Scissor-tailed Flycatchers at the Gunter Road site. Although the young had already fledged, what was assumed to be their nest was located about 30 feet above ground on a horizontal metal support strut of a utility pole. Adults were seen feeding the young through 20 June. Many visiting birders were able to approach the flycatchers closely without disturbing them. The birds' habit of perching on the utility lines along the road made observation and photography easy. The young were reported in the Gunter Road area on several occasions through 5 July. A report of a juvenile on 15 July was not confirmed.

A second breeding attempt was initially reported by Simon Harvey, who saw Scissor-tails, presumably the same pair, mating on 16 June. Chip Gilbert saw further mating on 20 June. Don Faulkner photographed the female nest-building on 18 June, and Chip and Sara Gilbert reported similar activities on 19 June. This nest was on a separate strut a few feet from the first nest. It appeared to be constructed of grass, plant stems, and twigs, and some possibly synthetic fiber. Donnie Coody and others saw the female sitting on the nest on 20 June. Chip and Sara Gilbert observed the female delivering food and then brooding the young on 10 July. These same behaviors were noted by Paul Serridge on 12 July.

The presence of nestlings was confirmed by Jeff Catlin and Pam Torlina on 14 July, when they observed the head of a single chick. On 17 July, Paul Serridge and others saw two chicks. Todd Arcos, Jeff Catlin, Don Faulkner, and Jane Kramer saw three nestlings on 20 July. On the morning of 24 July, Dennis Trapp observed the young fledge: one flew across the road to the tree farm; the other two stayed on the utility pole near the nest and were fed repeatedly by the adults. On 25 July, Paul and Barbara Serridge observed the young in a small tree in the tree farm. They were calling regularly, and the female was seen feeding them, while the male perched on a utility line. The Scissor-tail pair regularly and vigorously chased any birds that approached the nest. The male successfully repulsed Cooper's Hawks (*Accipiter cooperii*) and Red-tailed Hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*), well before they were near the nest. There were no further sightings of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in the Gunter Road area until 28 August, when Rob Hunnings photographed three flycatchers perched on the utility lines. After that date, the birds were not seen again, and all traces of the nests had disappeared. Double-brooding is rarely seen in Scissor-tailed Flycatchers. For example, in a two-year study of 111 breeding pairs in Oklahoma, only three cases of double-brooding were found. In two of these instances, the first brood fledged prematurely due to human disturbance (Regosin 1998).

In summary, this report provides details of two successful nestings by a pair of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers during June–July 2010 in the upper piedmont of South Carolina. These nestings constitute the fourth and fifth breeding records for the state, and the second and third instances in which young were confirmed fledging at a specific locality. The findings have additional significance because they document a case of double-brooding, which is rare in this species.

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## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Summer 2010, unless otherwise noted)

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*Briefs for the Files* is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	December 1–February 28	due March 20
Spring	March 1–May 31	due June 20
Summer	June 1–July 31	due August 20
Fall	August 1–November 30	due December 20

Reports can be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you type them and list the sightings according to the birds in checklist order (not according to dates or locations). If you submit your report to me through e-mail, please type your report directly into the message or copy it from a word processing program directly into the message. You may also attach your file to the e-mail, but if you do, please let me know the program used and also send a second version saved as a text (.txt) file.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in *Carolinabirds*. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from *Carolinabirds*. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** Eight, seemingly paired, were seen at Donnelley Wildlife Management Area (WMA), SC, 18 June (Laura Dornan), with at least four continuing through the end of the period (Ron Clark).

**Ross's Goose:** The seemingly healthy individual seen in E Horry Co, SC, during the spring was relocated with a flock of Canada Geese in the

Waterbridge subdivision of Myrtle Beach, 3 July (Ritch Lilly), providing the first summer report of this species in South Carolina.

**Tundra Swan:** Two swans, both probably injured, were seen in NC this summer—one on North Pond, Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), seen throughout the period (Ricky Davis, multiple observers (m.obs.)); and the other in the Lake Landing area of Mattamuskeet NWR, seen 3 July (Davis, Bill Deans).

**Ring-necked Duck:** A drake that remained at Salem Lake in Winston-Salem, NC, throughout the summer (John Haire) was probably the same bird seen on the Spring Bird Count (SBC).

**Common Eider:** Several first-year males remained in our region this summer—one near the groin at Oregon Inlet, NC, throughout the period (Jeff Lewis, Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.); one at the Rachel Carson Reserve in Beaufort, NC, 7 June (John Fussell, Paula Gillikin); one photographed on the jetty at the Little River Inlet, just S of the NC/SC state line, 9 June (*fide* KC Foggin); and two around Cape Point, Buxton, NC, in the latter half of July (Ricky Davis, Pat & Neal Moore).

**Hooded Merganser:** Providing evidence of breeding in our region were sightings of an adult and juvenile in a wetland in Burke Co, NC, 2 June (Walt Kent); and a female and about 7–8 nearly grown juveniles on a small beaver pond near Draughn, Edgecombe Co, NC, 9 June (Harry LeGrand).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** One seen around Oregon Inlet, NC, in July (*fide* Jeff Lewis) was the only lingering bird mentioned this summer.

**Northern Bobwhite:** Locally unusual were two in the French Broad River Valley of Henderson Co, NC, 12 July (Wayne Forsythe); and one on Round Bald, Roan Mountain, NC, 24 June (Rick Knight).

**Herald (Trinidad) Petrel:** A dark-morph individual seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 24 July (Brian Patteson, et al.) provided the year's first report of this rare pelagic species.

**Fea's Petrel:** One was well-seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 1 June (Brian Patteson, et al.)

**Great Shearwater:** "At least 350, most of which were within 20 miles of shore" were counted on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 10 July (Brian Patteson, et al.). Rare "from-shore" sightings were made from the fishing pier in Folly Beach, SC, 12 June (Chris Snook); and from Wild Dunes, Isle of Palms, SC, 7 July (David Abbott).

**Manx Shearwater:** Four seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 10 July (Brian Patteson, et al.) provided a good mid-summer count.

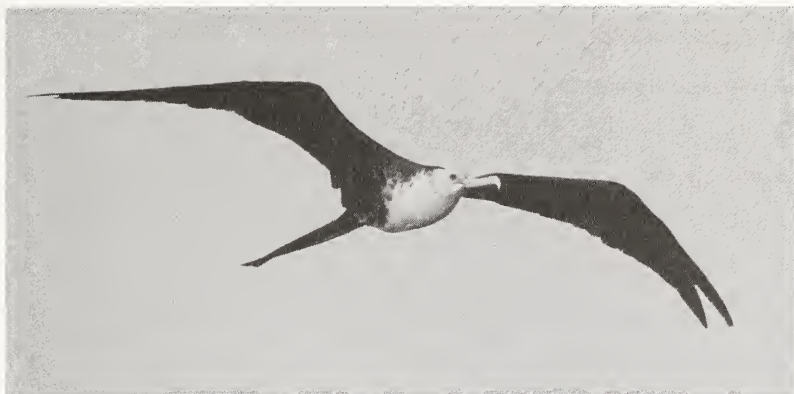
**Audubon's Shearwater:** Rarely seen from shore, two were seen from Wild Dunes, Isle of Palms, SC, 7 July (David Abbott).

**Wilson's Storm-Petrel:** Also rarely seen from shore, two were seen about 100 yards off the beach of Pea Island NWR, NC, 31 July (Ricky Davis).

**White-tailed Tropicbird:** An adult was well-seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 31 July (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Wood Stork:** A good count of 130+ was made at Huntington Beach State Park (SP), 12 July (Ritch Lilly).





Magnificent Frigatebird, 26 July 2010, Ocean Isle, NC. Photo by David Rintoul.

**Magnificent Frigatebird:** A juvenile was well-photographed over Ocean Isle, NC, 26 July (David Rintoul).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** Locally unusual during mid-summer were 15, mostly juveniles, near the upper end of Falls Lake in Durham Co, NC, 2 July (Brian Bockhahn); and one on Lake Julian, Skyland, NC, 17 July (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey).

**Anhinga:** Unusually far inland were four adults, including one on a nest, on a small beaver pond near Draughn, Edgecombe Co, NC, 9 June (Harry LeGrand); one on a nest along Swift Creek in the Seven Bridges Rd area of N Edgecombe Co, NC, 16 June (Ricky Davis); three seen circling high overhead at the upper end of Falls Lake in Durham Co, NC, 2 July (Brian Bockhahn); and one on a small pond in Bladen Co, NC, 7 July (Stacy Smaltz).

**American White Pelican:** Wandering through our region were ten in the New Hope Creek arm of Jordan Lake, NC, 7–9 June (Ginger Travis, Will Cook, Mark Kosiewski); and eight over the Intracoastal Waterway in Hampstead, NC, 19 June (*vide* Sharon Smart).

**Brown Pelican:** A juvenile was seen and photographed at Lake Wateree Dam, Kershaw Co, SC, 30 June through 9 July (Mike Williams, Lex Glover, Dan Tufford). Another juvenile was photographed on High Rock Lake in Rowan Co, NC, 11 July (Mike Erb, Karen Pridmore). Could both sightings be of the same wandering juvenile?

**Least Bittern:** One was seen in the wetlands near the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in Goldsboro, NC, 24 July (Eric Dean, Gene Howe). This species was also noted at this site during the previous two summers.

**Great Egret:** Nine in the French Broad River Valley of Henderson Co, NC, 11 July (Wayne Forsythe) was an unusually high count for that area.

**Snowy Egret:** Farthest inland were two at Riverbend Park in Conover, NC, 26–27 June (Monroe Pannell, Alisha Hayes, Dwayne Martin) and one at Tanner's Creek Pond in Mecklenburg Co, NC, 19–21 July (Kevin Metcalf).

**Little Blue Heron:** Post-breeding wanderings into the piedmont included a juvenile on a small pond in NW Mecklenburg Co, NC, 4–5 July (Kevin

Metcalf); six, five adults and one juvenile, at Riverbend Park in Conover, NC, 9 July (Monroe Pannell); a juvenile at the Walnut Wood Golf Course in SE Guilford Co, NC, 29 July (Dennis Burnette); and seven at Pee Dee NWR, NC, Anson Co, NC, 30 July (Will Stuart).

**Reddish Egret:** Individuals were found along the shore of Bogue Sound at the NC Aquarium in Pine Knoll Shores, NC, 29 June (Keith Camburn, *fide* John Fussell); and on the E end of the Rachel Carson Reserve in Beaufort, NC, 7 July (G. R. Dun).

**White Ibis:** Wandering juveniles were seen as far west as Highlands, NC, 4 July (Laura Blackburn, *fide* Edwin Poole); and in Muddy Fork, in the Broad River Basin, Cleveland Co, NC, 29 June (Tracy Morman).

**Glossy Ibis:** Three were seen flying SW over Beaufort Inlet in “obvious ‘fall’ migration” on the early date of 7 June (John Fussell). Fussell has observed this phenomenon of very early southward migration several times before and wonders if these birds are the ones that failed at nesting.

**Roseate Spoonbill:** The first post-breeding disperser arrived at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 17 July (Parkin Hunter, Jack Peachey) and two were there by 20 July (Ritch Lilly).

**Swallow-tailed Kite:** In North Carolina, where this species is not yet a documented breeder, sightings involved one in flight near Lake Gaston, NE of Warrenton, NC, 11 June (*fide* Lena Gallitano); one in flight, carrying a snake, over Richfield, Stanly Co, NC, 18 June (*fide* Dennis Burnette); and four foraging over fields along NC-210, just N of NC-53, E Bladen Co, NC, 20 July (Heather Renninger, Melissa Miller, *fide* Harry LeGrand).

**Mississippi Kite:** Breeding in the area was suspected when adults were seen with juveniles on a farm near Trenton, NC, 11 July (Clancy Ballenger); in urban Goldsboro, NC, 15 July (Mary Bridges); at the Wilson Country Club in Wilson, NC, 20 July (John Wright); and in Wilmington, NC, throughout the summer (Sam Cooper). In South Carolina, 133+ flying above the treeline to the N of Caw Caw County Park, Ravenel, SC, 30 July (Ron Clark) provided an impressive count.

**Northern Harrier:** A male was seen in flight over the marshes on Roanoke Island, NC, 19 June (Jeff Lewis). This site is close to the Bodie Island marshes, a site where this species has been seen in summers past.

**Broad-winged Hawk:** This species apparently bred in the Mill Creek area of Carteret Co, NC, again this summer, as a pair of adults was seen in May and a juvenile was seen in July (Jack Fennell, *fide* John Fussell).

**Purple Gallinule:** An adult looked very “out-of-place” walking atop shrubbery next to an oceanfront cottage in Duck, NC, 10–13 June (Jeff Lewis). One in the wetlands next to the WTP in Goldsboro, NC, 12 June (Eric Dean, Gene Howe) was a great find. In South Carolina, where this species is easier to find, nine, four adults and five chicks, were counted at Donnelley WMA, SC, 18 July (Jeff Lemons).



Purple Gallinule, 10 June 2010, Duck, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis

**Snowy Plover:** One was seen on Bear Island, Hammocks Beach SP, NC, 8–11 June (Sarah Bouknight, Ali Iyoob, Becky Desjardins). Could this bird be the same one that visited this site in the summer and fall of 2009?

**Wilson's Plover:** A good count of 17, including two juveniles, was made at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 15 June (Paul Serridge).

**Piping Plover:** One seen on the N end of Portsmouth Island, NC, 13 July (National Park Service Staff, *vide* Peter Doherty) had been banded in the Bahamas in February and fledged four chicks near Watch Hill, RI in April/May.

**Black-necked Stilt:** Of the four found at the Archie Elledge WTP in Winston-Salem, NC, 28 May, one remained until 3 June (John Haire). Six were counted at Bear Island WMA, SC, 17 July (Jeff Lemons).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Ten seen at Cedar Island, NC, 11 July (John Fussell, Jack Fennell) provided a good count for the summer season.

**Sanderling:** One seen at the Archie Elledge WTP in Winston-Salem, NC, 25–28 July (John Haire) was unusually far inland.

**Western Sandpiper:** One at the Super Sod farm in Henderson Co, NC, 20 July (Wayne Forsythe) was locally unusual.

**Ring-billed Gull:** One at the McAlpine WTP in Pineville, NC, 6 July (Tom Sanders, Ron Clark) was unusual for the mountains in mid-summer.

**Sooty Tern:** One was seen in the company of Black Terns off Cape Fear point, Bald Head Island, NC, 29 July (John Ennis, Lou Schiavo, Bob McGinness). An excellent count of 81–82 was made on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 31 July (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Least Tern:** Of the several colonies that nest on flat-topped buildings around Morehead City, NC, the high count, 100, from the Rite-Aid building in Atlantic Beach, 29 June (John Fussell) was somewhat low compared to past years.



**Sandwich Tern:** One seen 30 miles off the coast during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 10 July (Brian Patteson, et al.) was unusually far from land.

**South Polar Skua:** One was seen during a fishing charter out of Hatteras, NC, in mid-June (Brian Patteson) and one or two were seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 10 July (Patteson, et al.).

**Pomarine Jaeger:** One, harassing Royal Terns over the ocean, was seen from shore at Wild Dunes, Isle of Palms, SC, 7 July (David Abbott).

**Mourning Dove:** Scarce at higher elevations, one or two were seen at Carver's Gap, Roan Mt, NC, throughout the season (Rick Knight).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** In the NC mountains, the only part of our region where this species reliably breeds, sightings included one along the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) at Balsam Gap, NC, 12 June (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey); one at the Nature Conservancy's Bluff Mountain Preserve in West Jefferson, NC, 23 June (Merrill Lynch); one heard calling in the Snowbird Mountains of Graham Co, NC, 26–27 June (Cherrie Sneed); one heard in a yard in Buncombe Co, NC, 9–10 July (Gail Lankford); and one along the BRP at the Craggy Gardens picnic area, NC, 4 and 30 July (Chris Kelly).

**Chuck-will's-widow:** West of this species' typical range was a male heard calling in Webster, Jackson Co, NC, from late May through late June (Katherine Matthews, Jeremy Hyman, et al.).



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 8 June 2010, near Blowing Rock, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Two active nest cavities (adults feeding young) were photographed in the old maple trees around Bass Lake in Blowing Rock, NC, 8 June (Jeff Lewis). One bird was also seen and heard on Pond Mountain, 4750 ft, Ashe Co, NC, 3–4 June (Chris Kelly), though no nest was found.

**Alder Flycatcher:** 7+ were seen throughout the season on Roan Mountain, NC (Rick Knight).

**Willow Flycatcher:** At about the eastern limit of the species' breeding range, an individual was heard calling in the wetland on Ballinger Rd in Greensboro, NC, mid-May into June (Henry Link).

**Vermilion Flycatcher:** A breeding-plumaged male was well-seen as it actively fed from a perch in the scrub at the E end of Ocean Isle, NC, 20 July (Chris Decker). Later attempts to relocate the bird were unsuccessful. If accepted by the NCBRC, this sighting will provide the fifth record of this species in NC.

**Western Kingbird:** Though a few are found in our region each fall, one seen on a power line above the expansive fields along Newlands Rd, SW of Columbia, NC, 25 June (John Fussell) was extremely unusual for the mid-summer season. This bird is only the third ever reported during the summer season in the Carolinas.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** Many birders traveled to Piedmont, SC, this summer, to see a nesting pair of STFLs. The mated pair was first observed a few days prior to being reported 14 June (Lorraine Brown). In the following days, many birders observed the pair, and on 16 June, the adults were seen feeding three juvenile birds (Chip & Sara Gilbert). By 20 June, the female was observed sitting on a second(!) nest (Donnie Coody, et al.), and on 20 July three juveniles were photographed in the nest (Todd Arcos, Jeff Catlin, Don Faulkner, Jane Kramer).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** Some BBS routes reported encouraging numbers of this species, with four at three locations along a route in Lenoir Co, NC, 1 June (Rich & Susan Boyd); and four, a record number for a route near Hamilton, Martin Co, NC, 3 June (Merrill Lynch).

**Horned Lark:** Observers running BBS routes reported four at three locations in Lenoir Co, NC, 1 June (Rich & Susan Boyd); and one singing NW of Mocksville, NC, 6 June (John Haire). Possibly breeding in the area were three at Bear Wallow Mountain, Henderson Co, NC, 24 July (Chris Kelly, Wayne Forsythe). The peak late-summer count at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 25 birds on 25 July (John Fussell, Jack Fennell) was somewhat low compared to past years.

**Tree Swallow:** At about the eastern limit of the species' breeding range, a pair of adults successfully nested in the wetland at Bethabara Park in Winston-Salem, NC, where adults were observed feeding young in a bluebird box, 11 June (Phil Dickinson, Terri Maness).

**Cliff Swallow:** As was the case last year, several birds built new nests rather late in the season, on the walls of the Hampton Inn in Havelock, NC, in late June into July (John Fussell).

**Barn Swallow:** One seen 30 miles off the coast during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 24 July (Brian Patteson, Kevin Metcalf, et al.) was unusual.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** Defying explanation was an individual present in the Elizabethan Gardens in Manteo, NC, 10–21 June (Jeff Lewis). There are no previous summer reports of this species from the coast.

**Swainson's Thrush:** Not yet documented as a breeder in the Carolinas, three were found on point counts along the Appalachian Trail in Avery Co, NC, in June (*fide* Kevin Caldwell).

**American Robin:** On the Outer Banks, during the breeding season, numbers of this species tend to fluctuate from year to year. Jeff Lewis reports that "This past summer, we had the most I've ever seen here during that period."

**Brown Thrasher:** Uncommon at higher elevations, one or two were seen at Carver's Gap, Roan Mtn, NC, throughout the season (Rick Knight).

**Cedar Waxwing:** Outside of the mountains, reports included a pair found on a BBS route between Hyco Lake and Hillsborough, NC, in early June (Jeff Phippen, Toni Rexrode); a "rather territorial" individual along Catfish Lake Rd, near Catfish Lake in the Croatan NF, NC, 27 June (John Fussell, Jack Fennell); and two near Ringwood, Halifax Co, NC, throughout the summer (Merrill Lynch).

**Northern Parula:** An impressive count of 69 was made at Congaree NP, SC, 13 June (John & Rhonda Grego). Three males were heard singing in a spruce-fir-N hardwood forest along the Flat Creek Trail in Great Smoky Mountains NP, NC, at 5200 ft, an altitude higher than typical for this species, 26 June (Chris Kelly).

**Magnolia Warbler:** Two to four singing males were seen on Roan Mountain, NC, 8 June through 6 July (Rick Knight). Though this species probably breeds somewhere in this area each year, minimal evidence of breeding has ever been obtained for this species in North Carolina.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** Another warbler species for which a NC breeding record is long overdue, an adult Yellow-rumped was observed feeding a fledged juvenile at the Tricorner Knob Shelter during a point count along the Appalachian Trail in Avery Co, NC, in early June (Tom Howe). If accepted by the NCBRC, this sighting will provide the first breeding record of this species in NC. A pair was also seen on Roan High Bluff, Roan Mountain, NC, 8 June through 6 July, though no evidence of nesting was found (Rick Knight).

**Cerulean Warbler:** Six, including a family group of four, were seen along the BRP between Craggy Gardens and Mt Mitchell, NC, 4 July (Simon Thompson), providing an encouraging mid-summer count.

**American Redstart:** An uncommon breeder along the coast, an adult male redstart was observed singing in the Croatan NF, near Cahoogue Creek, about four miles NE of Havelock, NC, 6 and 8 June (John Fussell).

**Swainson's Warbler:** One heard singing on a BBS route in Jones Co, NC, 4 June (Wade Fuller, Rich Boyd) was a first for that route. An individual was heard singing in a rhododendron thicket, and then seen at close range, along the Jacob's Fork River at South Mountains SP, SE Burke Co, NC, 19 June (Dwayne Martin). A pair, one of which was singing, was found in the parking lot for the South Mills River trailhead, along Turkey Pen Rd on the border of Transylvania/Henderson Co, NC, 5 July (Marilyn Westphal, Mark Simpson). Westphal noted these birds were "much farther into the interior of the French Broad River watershed than either of us have ever [seen before]."



**Louisiana Waterthrush:** One, most likely an early fall migrant, seen in the Elizabethan Gardens in Manteo, NC, 26 July (Jeff Lewis) was locally unusual.

**Bachman's Sparrow:** A good count of eight was made at Carolina Sandhills NWR, Jefferson, SC, 19 June (Ron Clark, Jeff Lemons, Will Stuart).

**Vesper Sparrow:** 10+ were seen in the fields and fallow Christmas tree plots on Pond Mountain, 4750 ft, Ashe Co, NC, 3–4 June (Chris Kelly). One or two were seen on Round Bald, Roan Mountain, NC, throughout the season (Rick Knight).

**Lark Sparrow:** For the second year in a row, this species successfully bred at Carolina Sandhills NWR, Jefferson, SC, where two adults and two fledglings were seen 19 June (Ron Clark, Jeff Lemons, Will Stuart).

**Savannah Sparrow:** Two singing males were noted on a BBS route in W Alleghany Co, NC, 20 June (Merrill Lynch) at the same location where four were heard last year.

**White-throated Sparrow:** One seen eating sunflower seed hearts under a feeder in Gastonia, NC, 9 June (Steve Tracy) was quite late.

**Scarlet Tanager:** Of note was an orange color variant adult male that bred on private property just S of Mars Hill, Madison Co, NC, photographed 3 June (Jim Petranka).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Two juveniles were seen, and an adult was heard singing, on Standingstone Mountain, 3100 ft, N Greenville Co, SC, 24 June (Marion Clark). If accepted by the SC BRC, this sighting will provide the first confirmed nesting of this species in the state.

**Blue Grosbeak:** A rare breeder in the higher elevations, two singing males were seen on a BBS route in W Alleghany Co, NC, at 2700 ft, 20 June (Merrill Lynch).

**Dickcissel:** Dickcissels were seen again this summer at two of the more regular sites for this species in NC—in the fields near Cherry Hospital in Goldsboro, NC, where three, two males and one female, were seen 20 June (Eric Dean, Ricky Davis); and at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, where ten singing birds were seen 4 July (John Fussell, et al.).

**Bobolink:** This species apparently bred in a grassy area near Boone, NC, where at least five, including males and females, were seen in June (Curtis Smalling, Isaac Kerns).

**Baltimore Oriole:** A pair appeared to be nesting in the wetland on Ballinger Rd in Greensboro, NC, in early June (Henry Link).

**Red Crossbill:** Several, including calling males and a female carrying nesting material, were seen along the Flat Creek Trail (5200 ft) in Great Smoky Mountains NP, 26 June (Chris Kelly). Two males were seen on the NC side of Clingmans Dome, Great Smoky Mountains NP, 7 July (Phil Rusch).

**Pine Siskin:** A good mid-summer count of 30+ was made at the Cataloochie Ski Resort in Haywood Co, NC, 5 July (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey). Seen throughout the summer on Roan Mountain, NC, this species yielded a high count of 16 on 8 June (Rick Knight).

**American Goldfinch:** A few birds were present, and probably breeding, in the Croatan NF, near Havelock, NC, throughout the summer (John Fussell). Fussell notes that this location is “perhaps the easternmost point in our area where the species is reliably present every summer.”

## Fifty Years Ago in *The Chat*—December 1960

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General Field Notes in the December 1960 issue of *The Chat* contained several significant reports. Gadwall and Ruddy Ducks had been found breeding at Bull's Island, SC, "far removed from the normal nesting range". On 26 Aug 1960 a Parasitic Jaeger was found dead at the base of a TV tower near Raleigh, NC. In the summer of 1960, a small nesting colony of Least Terns was found on a small island off Snelgrove's Landing in Lake Murray, SC. At the same location, Spotted Sandpipers were found nesting; it was the first confirmed nesting record for the state. At the CBC Spring Meeting at High Hampton, NC, a pair of Brown Creepers was observed building a nest in the oak shingle siding of an unoccupied house. This was thought to be the "first nesting record for North Carolina in 25 years or more". A sight record of Northern Wheatear on the golf course at Charleston (SC) Country Club placed the species on the SC Hypothetical List. In Aiken, SC, John B. Hatcher reported a Kirtland's Warbler on 5 Oct 1960 and Common Redpolls in March 1960. A Lark Sparrow was found in Edisto Beach, SC in Oct 1960.

B. R. Chamberlain reported a careful analysis of observations of a Gull-billed Tern foraging at a pond near his house on Wadmalaw Island, SC. The tern would catch a large dragonfly or grasshopper and then leave. Based on flight direction and time to reappearance of 34–53 minutes he inferred that it was feeding young at a nest on Deveaux Bank, 6.7 miles away.

—Kent Fiala, editor



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